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THE DOCTRINE OF A FUTURE STATE,

And that of the

Soul's Immortality,

Asserted and distinctly proved;

In a SECOND

LETTER TO A *FREE-THINKER.*

Occasion'd by the Late

D. of BUCKINGHAMSHIRE's

EPITAPH.

By *RICHARD FIDDES*, D. D.
Rector of *Halsham.*

LONDON: Printed for J. PEMBERTON at the *Golden Buck* over-against St. *Dunstan's* Church in *Fleetstreet.* 1721.

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THE PREFACE.

I DO not think it neceſſary on occaſion of any thing, that has been objected to my former Letter, to vindicate the Explication given in it of the late Duke of *Buckinghamſhire*'s Epitaph. Some Perſons indeed, had the Candour to condemn that Explication, without reading it; others who read it, were under thoſe Prepoſſeſſions, that I had no Reaſon to expect an equitable Judgment from them. I had however the Satisfaction to oblige ſome indifferent Readers, who do not think popular Miſtakes, how wide ſoever they may ſpread, a ſufficient Bar againſt an impartial ſearch after Truth; or, where that cannot be abſolutely aſcertained, after the moſt probable and conſiſtent Appearances of

it, and moſt agreeable to the Rules of common Ingenuity.

The only thing which I here think my ſelf obliged to take Notice of relating to that Letter, does not ſo much reſpect the Performance, (for the Reputation of which I am leſs concerned) as the *Deſign* of it. It has been moſt unjuſtly inſinuated, I wrote that Letter with an indirect, and even with a mercenary View. I call upon any Man, or upon all Men Living, to make good ſo vile, and as I apprehend it, ſo very ſcandalous a Charge. Had an Eye to my own Intereſt, been the Motive, which induced me to write upon the ſeveral Occaſions of my appearing in Publick, I ſhould have taken a very different Method, from what I have purſued.

I have a juſt Eſteem for ſome great Men, whoſe learned and excellent Productions, have been of good Service to Religion, and yet if others may give themſelves a Liberty of forming Conjectures as to the ſecret Motives, upon which they might poſſibly have been induced to write; it is not impoſſible to charge them with other Motives, than thoſe, which were owing to a naked and ſincere love of Truth. It would notwithſtanding be highly injurious to them to exhibit any Charge of that Nature, upon mere ſurmiſe,

miſe, without producing any Proof for it; and, eſpecially, where no ſuch Proof can poſſibly be produced. Why ſhould I, be condemned by a Rule by which no other Writer will ſubmit to be tryed, or ought to be tryed?

Let the World judge as they pleaſe concerning my Performances, in any kind; I ſhall always deſire to follow the Light, and to ſtand corrected by better Judgments. I know my own Defects too well to imagine that I am not liable, on many Accounts, to Cenſure; But let Cenſure fall on me, where I am really to be cenſured, and not where other Perſons, neither have, nor can have any Right to judge. Let no Man, whoever he may be, pretend to know, with more certainty than my ſelf, the Honeſty and Rectitude of my own Intentions; and theſe I declare in my former Letter were no other than to prevent the ill conſequences to Religion, which the Unbelievers and Libertines of the Age, might pretend to draw, and which many of them actually endeavoured to draw, from the Example and Authority of ſo great a Man, and ſo fine a Wit, as the late Duke of *Buckinghamſhire*.

If this was thought a criminal Deſign, I am ſorry for the Weakneſs, or ſomething

worſe of thoſe, who repreſented it ſo. But I can by no means ask pardon of any Man, where my Deſign at leaſt was to ſerve, ſo far as I was capable in my narrow Capacity, the Cauſe of Religion, and at the ſame time to do ſome juſtice to the Memory of an injured Nobleman.

I ſhall beg leave to add, tho' it may ſeem unneceſſary after what I have declared already, that no Perſon in the World, who was the leaſt intereſted in my former Letter, or whom I could propoſe to oblige by it, had any notice, directly, or indirectly, of my Deſign, till my Papers were ready for the Preſs; and when it became requiſite that I ſhould employ what Teſtimonies relating to my Subject I could receive from proper Hands.

I hope however no prejudice on any Account can be entertained, againſt my preſent Deſign, which is to prove the Doctrine of a Future State, and of the Soul's Immortality, upon the Principles of natural Reaſon; and by ſuch Arguments, as may be clearly deduced from the very Principles of thoſe Free-thinkers, againſt whom I argue.

Yet, I am ſenſible, it has been the Opinion of ſome Perſons, that we ought not to prove

prove formally and distinctly in a way of human Reasoning those Doctrines, which are expressly and clearly confirmed by divine Revelation; but as the Reasons for this Opinion are no where better proposed, than in two Letters, which a Learned Friend wrote to me upon this Subject; I shall take leave to recite, and Answer them in such a Manner, as may consist with the Regard, which I justly bear to his great Learning and Judgment.

" Why, says he, do we trouble our selves " with these Inquiries, (upon the Subject of " the Soul's Immortality), from the Nature " of the Thing, when Revelation is full and " clear in every respect? Is it not like Light- " ing a Candle to see by at Noon-Day? " The Scripture is exceeding clear in these " Particulars.

" 1. That the Soul survives the Body.

" 2. That the Soul shall not Sleep till the " Resurrection.

" 3. That the Soul shall continue sensible " in Torment or in Happiness, to all Eter- " nity.

" Here is a full Answer to all our Inqui- " ries, among such as believe the Scripture,

" and we need nothing farther. The Light " of Nature muſt be owned, after all, to be " dark in compariſon. Life and Immortality " were never fully brought to Light, but by " the Goſpel. I am perſuaded we often do " more harm than good, by putting Things " upon the Foot of Reaſon only, which have " been clearly and fully determined by Re- " velation; what is this but returning to the " *weak* and *beggarly Elements*, (to uſe the " Apoſtles Phraſe on another Occaſion) after " we have had the benefit of a more *ſure* " *Word of Prophecy*, infinitely preferable " to the other?

In a following Letter he is pleaſed to add,

" After all, give me leave to ſay, (what " I before hinted) That this kind of Reaſoning " *from natural Principles*, on this Subject, " is fully ſuperſeded by the Benefit of a clear " and certain Revelation; and with ſubmiſ- " ſion to better Judgments, I would never ad- " viſe the offering them, in order to confute " any, that diſown Revelation. The Argu- " ments, which we bring have not half the " Force and Cogency, which thoſe have, that " prove the Truth and Certainty of the Scrip- " ture; they that hear not *Moſes* and the " Prophets, will not be perſuaded by obſcure " and darker Evidence; It is humouring

" them

" them too much to lay aſide our beſt Proofs " for them, and to attack them with our light " Armour."

To give the greater Advantage to what this excellent Perſon has advanced, I have cited his own Words, and omitted nothing, that either tended to enforce or embelliſh his Argument; yet I muſt beg leave in my turn, for the ſeveral Reaſons following, to diſſent from him, in the general Scope of it.

1. Our bleſſed Saviour, who ſpake with an Authority ſuperior to that of all other Perſons, by whom God, at ſundry Times, and divers Manners, revealed his Will to Mankind, frequently made uſe of a humane Way of Reaſoning to recommend and enforce his heavenly Doctrine. His Apoſtles, who were directed by a divine and infallible Spirit, followed him in the ſame Method; St. *Paul* in particular, in all his Epiſtles, reaſons, and in in a way, ſtrictly Argumentative, where the Subject requires he ſhould do ſo, from the natural Reaſon and Evidence of Things; from whence we may therefore conclude, the Deſign of Revelation, is not to *ſuperſede* our natural Inquiries, but to direct and aſſiſt them.

2. There is ſomething in the natural Evidence of Things, ſo agreeable to the Mind, and

and which at the ſame time tends to open and perfect it, that they ought for that reaſon to be made the proper Subject of Inquiry to it. Tho' we do then firmly believe the Truth of any Propoſition upon a competent Authority, yet it will ſtill have greater Influence upon us, and we ſhall ſubmit to it with more Pleaſure, when we ſee it illuſtrated by clear and diſtinct Reaſons. An Authority, which compells the Aſſent and cannot be reſiſted, may give ſuch a Propoſition greater Force; but Truth never appears ſo amiable and attractive, as when the natural Evidence, wherewith ſhe ſtands confeſſed, caſts, if I may ſo ſpeak, a viſible Glory about her.

3. I am ſupported in this Method, by the greateſt Divines and other eminent Writers, who have undertaken to confute the Principles, whether of Incredulity, or Corruption. Had they thought it ſufficient to aſſert, againſt the Enemies of Religion, on either account, the Truth of Chriſtianity in general, this had been a ſhort Method indeed of reducing all the Controverſies, with Men of looſe Morals or Principles, to one ſingle Point; and, by that Means, would have ſaved the Expence of much Paper and Time: But it has been thought more for the Service and Honour of the Chriſtian Religion,

to

to ſhew, that Chriſtians are not afraid to examin the great Articles of their Faith by the Light of Natural Reaſon; and that ſuch Articles of it, concerning which our Ideas are more inadequate, do not, however, contradict Natural Reaſon.

4. Both Prudence and Charity direct us to apply ſuch means of Conviction to Men, as may be proper to attain the End, for which they are apply'd. We are therefore, at all times, to conſider the Diſpoſition they are in, and to addreſs our Arguments, if we deſire they ſhould ſucceed, with a ſpecial regard to it. Now it frequently happens, that Men are much better diſpoſed to attend to thoſe Arguments, which are offered for their Conviction from the Natural Light or Evidence of Things, than to thoſe, which depend on a Series of Facts, or poſitive Authorities, how juſtly ſoever they may be deduced or atteſted.

5. It is in the Nature of the thing proper to diſpoſe Men to aſſent to the Facts or Authorities, upon which revealed Religion is aſcertained, when the Principal Articles appear, antecedently, to them, to have a reaſonable Foundation. It is not, I conceive, ſo much for want of Evidence, that Men do not believe the truth of the Goſpel, as becauſe they

they are under certain Prejudices, on account of the Doctrines taught in it, which hinder them from examining the Evidence, upon which the Truth of it may be demonstrated, with due care and attention. When we cannot directly convince Men, it may be proper, at least, to prepare the way to their Conviction, by removing those Impediments, which naturally tend to obstruct it.

6. Tho' it is granted then, the Arguments from natural Reason have not the Force or Cogency of those, which we bring from divine Revelation; yet they may be proper to open the Eyes of Men, that they may better receive the Truths revealed to them: Nay it is necessary, that some natural Principles should be previously assented to, before we can believe the Truth of any Revelation. It is not, simply, because *Jesus Christ* confirmed his Mission, by a great number of Miracles, that I believe him to be the *Messiah*; but because natural Reason informs me, the God of Truth, would not have empowered any Person to work one true Miracle in Confirmation of a Falshood. The Arguments which we deduce in proof of any Doctrine from the Wisdom, the Justice, and Goodness of God, are not less conclusive than those which we deduce from his Veracity, provided they can be deduced with equal Evidence and Certainty.

ty. They are ſo far then, when propoſed in a good Light, from being derogatory to the Truth, or Authority of the Chriſtian Revelation, that they highly tend not only to facilitate, but to invigorate the Belief of it.

7. It is an unſpeakable Advantage, after all to have any natural Principle confirmed by a divine and inconteſtable Authority. All Men are not capable of purſuing a long Train of Arguments, how well ſoever connected, or of drawing proper Conſequences from them, which yet may very naturally follow: But a divine Authority, is *for Confirmation*, an end of all diſpute. We are not however to infer, that becauſe Men are not equally capable of reaſoning from natural Principles, that therefore revealed Religion has wholly ſuperſeded the Uſe of human Reaſon, concerning the particular Doctrines of it. What is confirmed by Authority may notwithſtanding ſtill ſubſiſt in all the natural Reaſons of it, previous to ſuch Confirmation, and may therefore ſtill be conſider'd and explain'd, in reſpect to them.

8. In proving a Future State and the Soul's Immortality from natural Principles, we do not put things *upon the Foot of Reaſon only, which have been clearly and fully determin'd by Revelation.* We only argue

with Men, who as yet deny the Truth of Revelation, upon their own Conceſſions, or from the common Principles of human Reaſon, and that, by removing their Prejudices, we may more eaſily gain their Aſſent to the true Faith, tho' we follow them a little out of the way, to that End. We do not therefore chuſe to *lay aſide our beſt Proofs*, to *attack them with our light Armour*, but we make uſe of ſuch Armour as is proper on the Occaſion; and without which, in their preſent Situation, there is no coming at them. And if we are able to vanquiſh them, in the Cauſe of Truth, at their own Weapons, and in the way themſelves appoint; why ſhould we not improve the Occaſion to their own Benefit? We have ſtill our main Force, our *beſt Proofs* in reſerve, when ever there may be a proper Occaſion of employing them. To conclude, tho' they who do not *hear Moſes and the Peoples*, *will not be perſuaded by obſcure and darker Evidence*, yet an Evidence more dark and obſcure may better diſpoſe them *to hear Moſes* and the Prophets, and through the Bleſſing of God, bring them, by degrees, at leaſt *to the acknowledgment of the Truth*, *that they may be ſaved.*

9. Laſtly, That Declaration, *Chriſt hath brought Life and Immortality to Light thro' the Goſpel*, is very conſiſtent with the Proofs of

of a Future and Immortal Life, from natural Principles. It ſuppoſes, indeed, that the Chriſtian Revelation has given us a more full and expreſs Aſſurance concerning a Future and Immortal Life, than the World had, or generally at leaſt could have, from the mere Light of Nature. We have nothing to do under the Evangelical Diſpenſation, but to aſſent to this Doctrine upon the Authority of a plain and ſimple Propoſition; which before was to be made by a train of Conſequences, leſs clear and obvious, in the Conſtruction of them.

The Expreſſion however of *bringing* Life and Immortality to *Light* ſuppoſes, that Doctrine did ſubſiſt in the proper Reaſons of it, before it was brought to Light. But it can, by no means, be inferred from this Expreſſion, that it was impoſſible therefore for any Man to deduce this Doctrine, in a humane way of reaſoning; tho' it is now (bleſſed be God) propoſed in a manner better ſuited to the Apprehenſions, and Capacities of all Men.

It may be ſaid, with reſpect to the moral Duties, as well as ſpeculative Doctrines of Chriſtianity, that *Chriſt* has brought them to Light. They certainly appear with a brighter and ſtronger Evidence in the Goſpel, than in the Writings of any Philoſopher, or of all the Philoſophers together. It does not therefore follow that Men ought not to reaſon upon

the common Principles of Morality from the natural Light of their own Minds, or that thoſe Principles cannot be eſtabliſhed in a ſtrict way of Argumentation, by that Light.

A divine Revelation was, notwithſtanding highly expedient, both in reſpect to the Principles and Duties of natural Religion; as being proper, at once, to facilitate our ſearch after them, and to make them operate with greater Force. A Man may find his Way by the more obſcure Light of the Moon or the Stars, and the particular Occaſion of his Journey, may require that he ſhould make the beſt uſe of that Light: Tho' Men would rather chuſe, eſpecially where the Way is more intricate, or there may be danger of miſtaking it, to travel by the Light of the Sun.

I am much more diffident, leſt my Arguments ſhould not be propoſed in a good Light, than that my Deſign, in employing them ſhould be thought improper. However, I do not doubt, but the general Principles here laid down might be render'd of good Service to Religion, were they conſider'd in that Extent, by ſome Perſon of greater Force and Freedom of Mind, which the Dignity and Importance of the Subject may require. We have indeed ſeveral excellent Treatiſes upon the different Heads, concerning which I thought

thought myſelf obliged to ſay ſomething, tho' in a ſuccinct manner: But I do not know that all the Difficulties and Queſtions, that are here conſider'd, have been diſtinctly accounted for in any one Treatiſe.

That Matter is incapable of Thought, has been ſufficiently demonſtrated by ſeveral Perſons. Dr. *Clark* in particular, has merited by his Letters upon that Subject. And perhaps there is no Subject in Writing upon which, any Man can merit more, in order to ſerve the Cauſe of natural Religion, if we conſider this Article in all its natural and proper Conſequences.

On Suppoſition, that Matter can think, the Heathen Theology, chimerical as the Poets have repreſented it, might yet be true, and the chief Argument againſt Atheiſm from the Formation of the World by a deſigning Cauſe, would be deſtroy'd. *Epicurus* would have deſired nothing more in order to eſtabliſh his Syſtem, than a Cauſe which had an Idea of its own Work, and knew how to form it. He could not but be apprehenſive of the Abſurdity, how much ſoever he diſſembled it, of aſcribing thoſe wonderful Effects which he diſcover'd in the Structure of the World, and of its ſeveral Parts, to a thoughtleſs Cauſe. It is much eaſier to ſuppoſe a Man may make

a Clock

a Clock, without thinking of it, without knowing what he does, or to what end.

Neither Atheiſm, nor in truth Polytheiſm can well be confuted but upon the Principle, that Matter cannot think. If all things lay at firſt involv'd in the Confuſion of a Chaos, it might ſtill by the help of Thought mould and range the ſeveral Parts, of which it was compounded, into the Order which we now contemplate with Wonder. At leaſt the Suppoſition of an intelligent Chaos, wholly, or in part, might tend to remove a thouſand Difficulties in the atomical Hypotheſis, of which no Account can be otherways poſſibly be given.

A Corporealiſt would argue from this Conceſſion, that a Race of Gods might be generated in the way deſcribed by the ancient Mythologiſts; and that they grew, by juſt degrees, in Heaven, as Plants and Animals do upon Earth; nay, as the finer and more ſpirituous Parts of Matter aſcended into the celeſtial Regions, the native Deities in them would probably have been propagated in much greater number; and yet ſetting Experience aſide, which gives no natural Account of the Thing, it is as eaſy to conceive how a Vine ſhould produce a Grape, that thinks, as how any thinking Being ſhould be produced in the ordinary

ordinary way of Generation, or by occaſion of it.

I only mention theſe Things incidentally, to ſhew how cautious we ought to be in admitting a Principle, which if argued from by a juſt deduction of Conſequences, would tend in a manner to overthrow all Principles whether of natural Philoſophy, or natural Religion.

I thought it therefore particularly incumbent on me to ſhew that Matter is abſolutely, and however modified, incapable of Thought; and I will here add, that ſetting aſide the Teſtimony of Senſe, which for the Reaſon I am going to mention, is not in the preſent Argument infallibly to be depended on; we have much more clear and convincing Proofs concerning the exiſtence of immaterial Subſtances, than we have concerning the Exiſtence of Bodies. We have an inward Conſciouſneſs, which is the ſtrongeſt Evidence we can have of any thing, that we think, and we are able to prove certainly, if any thing admit of Proof, that Bodies cannot think: But it is poſſible that Bodies as we call them, may be only certain external Appearances, which yet ſhall affect the Mind, as Imagination frequently does in Dreams, as much, and with equal Force, as if Bodies really exiſted. I do not therefore deny that Matter does not exiſt,

iſt, but I deny that the Arguments for its Exiſtence, are as Concluſive and Cogent, as thoſe which we bring for the Exiſtence of immaterial Being: Becauſe it is abſolutely impoſſible, that what thinks ſhould not be; but there is no impoſſibility at leaſt in conceiving, that I may think of a Thing, and really be affected with the Thought of a Thing, which after all does not ſubſiſt, except in my own Mind.

It is certain, that the Qualities of Bodies which ſtrike our Senſes, are only mere external Denominations. If any Object of Senſe appear hot, hard, or coloured, and yet there is properly ſpeaking, neither Heat, nor Hardneſs nor Colour, out of the Mind, why may not Things alſo appear extended and moved, when they really are not ſo?

There is but one way of anſwering this Queſtion; and that is by ſaying, that God would then continually deceive us by Appearances, inſtead of Realities.

We may reply to this Argument, that it proves too much. Mankind, till the Modern Philoſophy was introduced, have in all Ages, as generally believed, that Honey is of itſelf ſweet, Fire hot, and Water cold; as that Bodies, as we call them, conſiſt of Parts, and

and have Motion. And yet it is thought no imputation upon the divine Wisdom, Goodness, or Veracity, that Men for so long a Tract of Time, were under a universal Mistake as to those Particulars, and that the far greater Part of Mankind are so still.

2. Our Senses are principally given us for the Preservation and good of the sensible Life; and to this End they are perfectly fitted; they inform us, with sufficient Exactness, concerning the Qualities of Objects, which have a power to hurt or to please us. The Eye for Instance sees the Light of the Sun, and we take a pleasure in beholding it; but when he shines forth in his Strength, or with a Lustre, that the Eye cannot bear without Pain, it turns away from it: these Sensations are even necessary to the support of the sensible Life; but as it has no relation to the good or ill State of it, that the Eye should know the real Distance or Magnitude of the Sun, so if we were to make a judgment of them by it, we should universally mistake in our Calculations. It might be observed in relation to all the other Senses, that they are not designed to teach us Philosophy, but only to regulate our Motions and Appetites in respect to the present State of Things.

3. If the Senſes will judge out of their proper Sphere, or where they are incapable of making a competent Judgment, it is not God that deceives us, but we deceive our ſelves, in applying them to a Uſe, for which they are not intended. It belongs to the Senſes to judge, in what relation Things ſtand to us, in the external World; but it belongs to Reaſon to judge concerning the Truth and Reality of thoſe Things. It appears equally evident to the Senſes, that there are Colours, as that there is Extenſion; the appearance therefore of Extenſion, may be all, for any thing we know, that God deſigns: all the Ends of his Wiſdom, Power, and Goodneſs, in his creating and governing the World, and in Miracles, ſeem to be equally anſwered, whether we believe an external World; or a World ſimply Ideal. It may be ſaid then, that God does not oblige any Man to believe that Colours do exiſt, but only that they appear to exiſt; and that he has eſtabliſhed ſuch an admirable Order among all outward Appearances, as if the Things which they repreſent, really did exiſt; however, were I to ſay that the Fire is hot, or the Sun ſhines, I ſhould ſpeak truly, tho', with the Scriptures, on ſeveral Occaſions, according to appearance only. In a Word, ſince the Objects of Senſe, as we term them, neither are, nor can be the cauſe of our Senſations; we might feel Cold and Heat,

Heat, ſee Colours, perceive Bodies moved and extended, tho' there were really no Bodies. No one will deny, that it is poſſible, for infinite Power and Wiſdom, to ſupport the preſent Syſtem of Things, according to this Hypotheſis; and we need no other Conceſſion to ſhew what was to be inferred, that the Argument from a thinking Being is therefore much ſtronger than any which are, or can be brought in proof of a material Being. The former excludes all poſſibility of Doubt from Self-conſciouſneſs; there is a poſſibility at leaſt that the later may have no true, or real Foundation.

One of the greateſt Difficulties, which has been thought to lye againſt the Argument, that all thinking Beings are Immaterial, and conſequently in my way of arguing Immortal, is that which I have conſider'd in Relation to Animals in general. For I do not found the Reaſons for the Immortality of human Souls in this, that the intellectual Faculties of Man are ſuperior to thoſe of other living Creatures; that his Knowledge is more extenſive, or diſtinct, that he deduces one thing from another, after a more perſpicuous or methodical manner; but ſimply upon this Conſideration, that he is a thinking Being. If we allow, that Matter is capable in any degree of Thought, it may be capable, for any thing we can know to the contrary, of

the higheſt and moſt perfect degree of Thought. And therefore I am by no means able to diſcover the Philoſophical Grounds of St. *Auſtin*'s Doctrine; that *the Life of Brutes is a ſpirituous Matter, conſiſting of Air and Blood, animated but ſenſible, endowed with Memory, but without Underſtanding, expiring with the Body and then vaniſhing into Air. Vita Brutorum eſt ſpiritus vitalis, conſtans de aere & ſanguine, animalis ſed ſenſibilis, memoriam habens, intellectu carens, cum carne morieus, in aera evaneſcens.* I readily own if this Doctrine be allowed, the Principal Arguments which I have urged for the Immateriality, and in Conſequence of that, for the Immortality of human Souls will be deſtroy'd. But then as I do not poſitively determine, whether Brutes do think; whether their Actions are perform'd according to certain Laws of Mechaniſm, eſtabliſhed by the allwiſe Creator; or whether they are under the Direction of ſome other *intelligent* Being; ſo, which ſoever of theſe Principles we admit, I am not in the leaſt affected by it. If Animals do think, the Conſequence, in my way of arguing, will be, that they are Immortal. But I am not at all afraid of this Conſequence. Let thoſe who diſſent from me make the beſt Advantage of it. I ſee no inconvenience in ſuppoſing that when the inferior and corruptible part of Brutes is deſtroyed, the nobler part of them,

them, which is not capable of Diſſolution, ſhould be preſerved. But it may be thought very inconvenient and derogatory to the Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs to ſuppoſe, that the utter Extinction of an infinite Number of thinking Beings, ſhould depend upon a Shower of Rain, or a Change of the Air. For there is no greater Reaſon to believe that the Operations of many Inſects which are continually deſtroy'd by theſe Cauſes, are merely Mechanical, than thoſe of a Horſe or an Elephant. The difference therefore which ſome Men have aſſigned between the Souls of Men and of Brutes, like that between Money and Medals, ſeems rather ingenious, than ſtrictly Philoſophical. Medals, ſay they, are coin'd, with a Deſign, that they ſhould always laſt; Money is only to be current, till ſome new Occaſion may happen for calling it in. As this Diſtinction is without any Reaſon to ſupport it, ſo it deſtroys the ſtrongeſt natural Proofs we are able to bring for the Immortality of human Souls; which we muſt be obliged to give up, if Beaſts have material Souls, what periſh with their Bodies. In a word, according to theſe Men, God creates thinking Beings, and continually deſtroys them; he does not ſo with any part of Matter. He therefore preſerves the leſs perfect Subſtance, and deſtroys the more perfect. What can be the Reaſon of a Conduct ſo repugnant to all our Ideas of that admirable Or-

der

der, and Wiſdom, by which He governs the World?

If on the other hand Animals do not think, if either they are mere Machines, or are directed by ſome foreign Intelligence in their Motions, then no manner of Conſequence can be drawn from them againſt what I have advanced, directly, or indirectly. If they do not think indeed, notwithſtanding the fine Schemes, which ſeveral of the *Carteſians* have given of their Operations, the later Opinion appears much more probable. And it is ſupported by the Authority of ſeveral great Names, particularly that of the Exccellent Mr. *Boyle*, to whoſe curious Reſearches into the Works of Nature, the Philoſophical World is ſo highly indebted. Speaking of thoſe, who pretend to explicate, but after an unſatisfactory manner, how Bodies can act according to Laws, and for determinate Ends, without any Knowledge either of the one or the other; He has theſe Words; "Let them "therefore till they have made out their Hy-"potheſis more intelligibly, either ceaſe to aſ-"cribe to irrational Creatures ſuch Actions, as "in Men, are apparently the Productions of "Reaſon and Choice; or elſe let them, *with* "*us*, acknowledge, that ſuch Actions of Crea-"tures in themſelves irrational, are perform-"ed under the Direction and Guidance of a "wiſe

« wiſe and intelligent Author of Things. *(Experim. Phil. p. 8.)*

It may be thought perhaps, that the Argument from the general Expectations of Men concerning a future Life, as I have propoſed it, in the twenty ſecond Section, ſeems rather to conclude for a future State in general, than as I have there deſigned it, for the Immortality of the Soul. I am ſenſible this Argument had been propoſed to greater Advantage, if inſtead of a future Life, I had uſed the Terms of a future *and immortal* Life; which the Reader may, if he pleaſes, ſupply, and what the expectation of a future Life, does, by an eaſy Conſequence, ſuppoſe. For the ſame Reaſons, upon which Men do expect to live in another State, it will be natural for them to expect, that they ſhall always live.

There is but one thing more, which I here think myſelf concerned to obviate, and that is a Pretence, which may be made, that I have not ſufficiently proved, or after ſo particular a Manner as might have been expected, that the Soul when deprived of its vital Powers, may not ſtill be ſerviceable to many wiſe and good Ends of Providence, as Matter when diſſolv'd, is ſtill capable of anſwering many Ends in the material Syſtem; upon this I would obſerve,

1. That there is leſs neceſſity of inſiſting upon the Proof of a Negative. 2. That

2. That when the Soul has loſt its vital Powers, whatever Ends God may render the Subſtance of it uſeful to, yet as in loſing them, it is deprived of it's greateſt Excellencies, the moſt excellent Ends to be ſerved by it are plainly fruſtrated; for every Thing muſt be ſuppoſed more uſeful, and to better Purpoſes, in proportion as it is endowed with better or more noble Qualities.

3. We are capable of conceiving how infinite Power and Wiſdom may ſerve many Ends, by a thinking immaterial Subſtance; but we cannot well conceive, how any Ends can be ſerved by thoughtleſs immaterial Subſtance. If after all, there really is any ſuch Subſtance. And the proper way of arguing, is from what we can conceive concerning the Nature and Uſes of Things, not from ſuch Powers, Qualities, or Ends of them, concerning which we can have no Knowledge.

To conclude, we do not deny that infinite Power and Wiſdom can ſerve the Ends of Providence by any Thing; but we are able to diſcover, and upon *this* our preſent Argument is founded, that certain Ends may be ſerved by a thinking and animated Being, which cannot be ſerved by a Being without Cogitation or Life.

THE

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ERRATA.

PAge 3. line 22. *in* r. *is.* p. 11. l. 9. dele *of.* p. 20. l. 9. *After Consideration make* (.) l. 10. dele *for.* p. 38. l. 2. dele (,) *after Morning and* add (,) *after every Way.* p. 55. l. 19. *after Mankind* (;) p. 61. l. 4. *after Work* add (,) p. 76. l. 3. dele *true.* p. 78. l. 30. *react* r. *reach.* p. 79. l. 5. r. *Chanels.* l. 24. *on* r. *in.* p. 80. l. 20 *what* r. *which.*

SIR,

June 22. 1721.

SIR,

I Shall now proceed directly to Anſwer the remaining Parts of your Letter, which have not yet been examined; and eſpecially, that Part of it, wherein you deſire, I would deſcend to conſider the Article relating to the *Immortality of the Soul*, and a *Future State*, in a more diſtinct manner.

The Doctrine of the Soul's Immortality, and that of a Future State, have been often mention'd by others, as they are here by your ſelf, indiſcriminately; as if they imported the ſame Fundamental Article of Natural Religion; and yet there are good and very reaſonable Grounds, upon which we may put a material difference between them, and ſeparately prove the Truth of them, by different Arguments: For the Soul may be conceived, by ſome Perſons, to be naturally mortal; who, notwithſtanding, may be-

lieve, that, by the poſitive Will of God, it ſhall not only after the Death of the Body, ſubſiſt in a Future State, and exerciſe all the Powers and Functions proper to it, but, one time or other, be united again to the Body, according to thoſe Laws, or ſome other like Means of Communication, which the Power of God has, at preſent, eſtabliſh'd between them.

Others, who believe it neceſſary, in order to a Vindication of the Divine Juſtice, and of the unequal diſtributions of Providence to wicked and good Men, in this Life, that there ſhould be a future State, may yet be of Opinion, there is no neceſſity, that State ſhould be of an endleſs duration; or that the Life of the Soul ſhould be perpetuated in it; becauſe, after a certain Period of Time, whether the Soul be conſign'd to a State of Reward or Puniſhment, all the Ends of Divine Juſtice, in relation to it, may be ſufficiently anſwer'd; and then God may, if he thinks fit, either totally deſtroy the Powers, or annihilate the Subſtance of it.

SECT.

SECT. I.

The Proof of a Future State, from a Conſideration of the Divine Wiſdom.

I Shall therefore, ſince this Article relating to a Future State, ſeems to be of more general Conſideration, endeavour to prove, in the firſt place, the Truth of it, and that by an Argument, which appears demonſtrative to thoſe who believe there is a God, who made, and who governs Mankind.

I deſire nothing, Sir, in proſecuting this Argument, but to ſuperſtruct upon your own Principles, or at leaſt upon the common Principles of thoſe Gentlemen, who are pleaſed to call themſelves Free-Thinkers: For I would not be ſo injurious to them, as to ſuppoſe, they will in general deny, either that God created, or that he governs the World, and the ſeveral Species of Beings in it.

Now the Conſtitution of all Government abſolutely ſuppoſes, that the Subjects of it are govern'd by certain Laws, proper to their State and Condition; and if thoſe Subjects are rational Beings, that they are govern'd by ſuch Laws, as are ſuited to a rational Nature.

You ſhall preſently ſee the uſe, which I deſign to make of this Conceſſion, ſo reaſonable, in reſpect to the common Sentiments of Free-Thinkers, and which I have a Right to demand, from your ſelf in particular.

Becauſe, tho' you contend for a Latitude, in moral Life; and think that Divines, and other moral Writers, are too ſtrict, in the Rules which they preſcribe for the Conduct of it, yet you do not give the leaſt intimation, that you condemn the Rules of Morality in general, or abſolutely as ſuch: Nay, from the very Grounds, upon which you contend for a Relaxation, in certain Caſes, of thoſe Rules, and the reaſonableneſs of diſpenſing with them, when they appear more rigorous; it is ſuppoſed there are ſuch Rules, for what *is not*, cannot, in any proper Senſe, either be diſpenſed with or relaxed.

And, if God governs Mankind, and there are, upon your own Conceſſion, certain Rules, whereby Mankind ought to be govern'd; then I infer upon a Suppoſition, the reaſonableneſs of which I am ſure you will not diſpute, that if God is a Wiſe Governour of the World, there cannot be a more clear and demonſtrative Proof of any Mathematical Propoſition, than there is, in a human way of reaſoning upon moral Principles, concerning the Doctrine of a Future State.

For

For a wiſe Governour muſt always be ſuppoſed to enforce his Laws, by ſuch Sanctions; without which, the Obſervation of them cannot be ſecur'd, nor, conſequently, the proper Ends of Government be attain'd.

That the Rules of Morality are not here in general ſufficient to ſecure the Obedience of Men, without any regard to a Future State, is too viſible, from the promiſcuous Events of Life, to wicked and good Men; and, in particular, from the preſent Inconveniences, and great Diſtreſs, with which even Virtue itſelf is ſometimes attended. We have not only opportunities of obſerving that the virtuous are unhappy, but that their unhappineſs, on certain occaſions, is directly and viſibly owing to a principle of Virtue.

Now, as we have a natural and invincible deſire to be happy; as this deſire was originally implanted, and is continually impreſſed on us, by the Author of Nature; as the Rules of Duty in this Life, are, in certain caſes, ſo far from promoting our Happineſs, that they rather tend to deſtroy it, and to render us miſerable; it neceſſarily follows, that if in this Life only the virtuous have Hope, the Sanction which God has given to the Laws, whereby we are in general to regulate our Behaviour, is not ſufficient to ſecure our Obedience to them.

There muſt, therefore, by clear and undeniable conſequence, be a Future State of Retribution;

bution; the Belief of which may ſecure the Obedience of Men, and which they indeed, in whom this Belief is ſtrong, lively and permanent, will effectually diſcharge; otherwiſe you muſt be obliged to allow, that the Allwiſe God has propos'd an End, namely, Obedience to his Laws, without affording Men any adequate, any competent, I ſhall add, any reaſonable Means of attaining that End: For there can be no reaſonable Motive to Obedience, no proper Obligations laid upon Men, to act contrary to the prime and eſſential Inclination of Human Nature, the *deſire of Happineſs*.

In a word, to ſuppoſe that the Supreme Legiſlator ſhould require us to ſerve him in a way, which directly tends to deſtroy our Happineſs, is to ſuppoſe him preſcribing a Rule of Obedience to us contrary to the moſt ſtrong and invincible Motive, upon which we can be induced to obey.

SECT. II.

An Exception, which may be thought to lie againſt what has been ſaid, conſider'd.

THe only poſſible Exception, which can be made to the Argument, here propos'd, is, that the preſent Motives to Virtue,

tue, from the native Excellency of it, and the Pleaſure of reflecting, that we have acted conformably to it, are ſufficient, upon the whole Matter, to engage Men to the practice of a pure and ſtrict Morality.

We do not deny, that there is a Beauty and Comlineſs in Virtue, which is very attractive and engaging. As the ſenſible Eye is delighted with material Objects, that are regular and uniform, ſo is the intellectual, in contemplating the Relations of Order and Proportion, between things of a moral conſideration. But powerful as this natural, this mechanical Love of Regularity is, whether in the Works of Nature, or Art, there is ſcarce a Man to be found, who would be willing to demoliſh a fine Seat, that he has built at a vaſt Expence, and, in all other reſpects, according to the Rules of Architecture, merely for the want of an exact correſpondency in every part of it, which perhaps the Situation of the Place, or ſome other Circumſtance, would not admit. As few Perſons, notwithſtanding the innate Love of Moral Virtue and Order, whereby they are moved, would be willing to ſacrifice all the Advantages of Life, when, under ſome unhappy accidental Conjunctures, they are either oblig'd to part with them or with their Innocence.

I do not know, how far an inbred Ardour and Greatneſs of Mind, might carry ſome particular

particular Perſons, in the Cauſe of Virtue, againſt all the Terrors and Flatteries of this World; or whether, in Fact, there have not been Inſtances of Virtue ſuperior to all Obſtacles of this kind, without any proſpect of future Retribution. But theſe are only Eſſays of Fortitude proper to very ſublime and heroick Spirits. When we ſpeak of thoſe Rules, whereby all Mankind are to be govern'd, we are to conſider them, as calculated by a Wiſe Legiſlator, to the general State and Condition of Men.

We farther grant, there is a very ſenſible Pleaſure, which ariſes in the Mind, from the reflexion of our having acted according to Order, as well as from the pure and naked Contemplation of it. And herein, indeed, conſiſts the proper Pleaſure of Man; of Man formally conſider'd, and diſtinguiſh'd, as a reaſonable Creature; becauſe it is the Pleaſure which proceeds from a due and proper uſe of Reaſon. Other Pleaſures, whereby we are affected, are the Pleaſures of the Machine, of the Animal, or, at moſt, of the Natural Life: But the true and genuine Pleaſures of a reaſonable Being, muſt flow from a free exerciſe of thoſe rational Faculties wherewith it is endow'd.

And, therefore, as all Actions agreeable to the Frame and Conſtitution of their reſpective Subjects, and which tend to their greater Perfection, are for that reaſon pleaſant

ſant, it is neceſſary in particular, and according to this wiſe and general Law of Providence, that all Human Actions, which owe their Origin to a Principle of right Reaſon, and are, at the ſame time, perfective of Human Nature, ſhould be attended with an inward and conſcious delight.

But ſtill, we ſay, the Pleaſures ariſing from a preſent Senſe, whether of Moral Truths or Duties, and of a Practice regulated by them, either for want of Light and Liberty of Mind, in ſome Perſons, or by reaſon of prevailing Paſſions, or ſuperinduced Habits in others, are not always ſo lively and affecting, as they might otherwiſe be expected; and therefore have not Force ſufficient univerſally to influence the Conduct of Men, or to reſtrain them within the Bounds of their Duty; for which reaſon, it becomes neceſſary, both that more powerful Motives to Obedience and Reſtraints from Sin, ſhould be enacted, from a Conſideration of ſuitable Rewards and Puniſhments in another Life.

Yet we do not deny, that ſome Men may poſſibly be formed by Nature, with ſuch good and generous Diſpoſitions, or be placed here in ſo advantagious and happy a Situation, that the Motives to perform their moral Obligations, ſhall, in many reſpects, be of Force ſufficient to excite and animate their Obedience: But, we abſolutely deny, that, conſidering the preſent State of Mankind in

general, the moral Obligations, here laid upon them, are without any farther proſpect ſufficiently enforc'd. If they, whoſe Hopes are full of Immortality, find it ſo difficult, on many occaſions, to practiſe the Rules of ſtrict Virtue, upon what Conſiderations could we expect an uniform Obedience from them, whoſe Hopes are wholly terminated in this Life?

But will not this concluſion then of neceſſity follow, that there is, at leaſt, no viſible occaſion of ſuppoſing a Future State, in reſpect to thoſe Perſons, who are naturally ſo well diſpoſed, and to whom Providence has made, in this Life, an appointment ſo very favourable.

I am unwilling to diſſemble any Argument, that has the leaſt appearance of reaſonable Foundation, which may be of uſe to thoſe againſt whom I argue; and ſhall therefore particularly reply to the Difficulty here propos'd. And,

1. It is highly improbable, that Beings of the ſame Kind, and endow'd with the ſame Vital Powers and Capacities, by an Alwiſe and good Creator, ſhould not have Life, and every proper Function of it, preſerved to them by the ſame general Laws of his Providence: But that, in ſome of them, the Soul, with all the Powers of Cogitation, ſhall, upon the Death of the Body, be for ever extinct, whilſt, in others, it ſhall ſurvive the Body,

Body, or, one time or other, be reſtor'd to Life again; and to the former, uſe and exerciſe of its rational Faculties.

2. It is ſtill more improbable and irreconcilable, to the Perfections of the Divine Nature, that thoſe Perſons, in particular, ſhould ceaſe to live in a Future State, who had made the beſt uſe of their Liberty in this Life, and ſo be excluded from a common Privilege of of Mankind, for that very reaſon, or only becauſe they improv'd thoſe happy Circumſtances, under which God had plac'd them here, to the beſt Advantage, and in order to render to him a more ſincere, uniform, and *reaſonable Service.*

3. Mankind are now, by Conceſſion, in general, under certain moral Obligations: In order to enforce which, I have prov'd, it is neceſſary, there ſhould be ſome adequate Sanction. And that I call an adequate Sanction, which is ſufficient, when we ſpeak of rational Beings effectually to engage a rational Obedience: For an inadequate Sanction, or upon any other Conditions, is, in effect, no Sanction, and cannot therefore be the Sanction of a wiſe Legiſlator; So that I argue, a Sanction, which, conſidering the Frailty, the Ignorance, and Temptations incident to Men in this Life, is only fit to influence and affect Men of an uncommon felicity of Temper, or, who are under uncommon Circumſtances of Life, and in Love with the ab-

ſtracted Beauty of Truth and Order, cannot be a Sanction to engage Mankind, in *common*, to the obſervance of thoſe moral Obligations, under which it was deſigned to bring them: And which, tho' poſſibly it may have the proper effect on ſome few, ſome very few great and generous Minds, yet ſuppoſes the Legiſlator, even in reſpect to them, rather proceeding according to the rigour and ſeverity of Juſtice, than to the ordinary Methods of his Mercy and Goodneſs, in other Caſes.

4. But whether ſuch Perſons may, for that very reaſon, which beſt qualifies them for the Happineſs and Enjoyment of a Future State, be excluded from the Benefit of it: The concluſion does ſtill neceſſarily hold good; that, the generality, the much greater part of Mankind, in a manner, and upon the Compariſon, all Mankind, muſt either be ſuppos'd accountable to the Supreme Lawgiver in another World, or elſe it muſt be acknowledg'd, he has not ſufficiently provided for the Honour and Authority of his Laws, in the preſent World.

It is neceſſary then, from a Conſideration of the Divine Wiſdom and Government, that we ſhould believe a Future State of Retribution to Mankind in general: And there is no poſſible way of evading this Argument, but by ſaying, that God to ſecure the Obedience of Men to his Laws, has oblig'd Mankind in general to believe an Error, and on this

this very Error, to found the principal and moſt effectual Motives to their Obedience; than which impious and irrational Suppoſition, nothing can be conceiv'd more derogatory to the infinite Perfections of the Divine Nature.

SECT. III.

The Proof of a Future State, from a Conſideration of the Divine Juſtice.

ANother Argument, in proof of a Future State, may be deduced from the Juſtice of God, as the former was from his Attribute of Wiſdom.

The two Ends, ſo far as they admit of a diſtinct Conſideration, which God had in creating Mankind, were his own Glory, and their Happineſs. The Divine Nature and Attributes being eſſentially the ſame, the Glory of God is the Glory of his Attributes, and cannot ſubſiſt, or be conceived to ſubſiſt ſeparately: So that without too curious an Inquiry into the particular Reaſons or Methods, of Gods glorifying himſelf, by the Creation of Mankind, this general concluſion, ſufficient to my preſent purpoſe, will follow, that when God did create Mankind, he conſulted

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their Happineſs in ſuch a manner, as might perfectly conſiſt with the Honour and Perfections of his own Nature.

The Perfection, which I would more particularly propoſe to conſider at preſent, is that of Divine Juſtice, whereby God is inclined to proceed with Mankind, after a manner, upon which they cannot poſſibly found any reaſonable Complaint of injurious Uſage.

Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do Right? Is a Queſtion ſo evidently founded in the natural Reaſon and Propriety of it, that it admits of no Diſpute, except among thoſe Perſons who maintain, that God, in exerciſing his Sovereign Dominion over intelligent Beings, does not act by any other Rule, than, from the mere Arbitrary Determination of his Will, nor, by any Conſiderations, in the Order of our Ideas, antecedent to it.

But I ſhall not here inſiſt upon the Confutation of a Principle, ſo univerſally exploded by all Men, who argue from the natural Reaſon and Evidence of Things, and which has been objected againſt revealed Religion, by ſome Free-Thinkers, as one Reaſon why they cannot aſſent to the Truth of it: And indeed upon this Suppoſition, that the Truth, or moral Rectitude of Things, does not depend upon any antecedent Reaſon, but purely on the Deſpotick Power of God, ſuppoſing the Chriſtian Revelation, in particular, to be really true, yet it will be impoſſible to prove

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it true, becauſe we have no poſſible way of knowing whether God really deſign'd it ſhould be true, unleſs from his expreſs Declaration: But whether that Declaration was according to the real Sentiments of his Mind, whether he might not have ſome *Secret* Will in oppoſition to his Revealed Will in making it, can only be proved from thoſe moral Perfections of his Nature, whereby, tho' he has no Superiour, he inviolably regulates himſelf, and which, according to our way of conceiving things, are prior to all his *Volitions*.

If ſome Men, by reaſon of their Prejudices, or falſe Interpretations of Revealed Religion, have advanced Doctrines, that are not to be found in it, and which tend to overthrow the Grounds of all Religion, and of all Morality, this is an accidental Scandal on Revealed Religion; for which they who give occaſion to it, are only accountable, but ought not to affect the Truth or Authority of Divine Revelation in general, or, particularly, of the Chriſtian Revelation.

I ſhall, therefore, lay it down as a Principle acknowledg'd by all Men, who pretend to a free and natural uſe of Reaſon, that God, in tranſacting with Mankind, does not proceed upon a claim of Power, wholly arbitrary and deſpotick, but by *Right* of a Power regulated by the immutable Laws of Juſtice and Equity, according to the moſt clear, obvious,

vious, and general Notions, which we can have concerning thoſe Laws.

One of thoſe Laws, and which diſcovers it ſelf with the brighteſt Evidence and Conviction, is, that the Miſeries of Life, to which Man is expos'd, ought never, upon a general Survey, to exceed the Benefits of his Creation. For to ſuppoſe that God ſhould conſign Man to a State of Life, wherein he will be more miſerable, than if he had never been, is to ſuppoſe him tranſacting with Man upon Conditions, to which, had they been previouſly made known to him, he would not have given his conſent; upon Conditions, which, ſetting aſide all Regards of ſtrict Juſtice, are contrary to the very End and Deſign of the Divine *Goodneſs*, in creating him; and which can never be reconciled with our common Ideas of that glorious Attribute in particular.

And yet, if there be no Future Life, there is, I conceive, a neceſſity of granting that it had been better, for a great Number of Perſons, upon the whole Matter, and all things conſider'd, if they had never been born: And this may naturally be ſuppoſed the Caſe, if it has not frequently happened, not only of innocent Children, but of many good Men.

In Anſwer to what is obſerved concerning good Men, it may be reply'd, that tho' in general they have made a right uſe of their Liberty,

Liberty, yet by abuſing it in certain Inſtances, they juſtly deſerve, from a juſt God, all the Miſeries which they ſuffer in this Life. It is added, that very good Men, the beſt of Men, are not without their Frailties and Errors, which a juſt God may puniſh here, in what manner, and conſidering the ſhort duration of their Pains, to what degree he thinks fit.

Without deſcending to an Inquiry, foreign at preſent to my purpoſe, concerning the proportion of Time or Meaſure, which there ought to be between an Offence committed againſt Almighty God, and the Puniſhment inflicted by Him; I only deſire to know, whether thoſe Frailties and Errors, which here expoſe Men to Sufferings, that comparatively render their Lives more miſerable than happy, are really invincible, or not: If they are invincible, ſuch a procedure of the Divine Oeconomy towards them, cannot be reconciled, according to our common Ideas of it, with ſtrict Juſtice: If they are not invincible, then by a good uſe of their Liberty Men may avoid them; and yet, notwithſtanding their Endeavours to this End, by occaſion of one Misfortune or other, of Violence or Oppreſſion, of Chronical or Acute Diſeaſes, of Cruelty or other Diſtreſs, the Miſeries of their preſent Life may, upon the whole Matter, exceed the Benefits of it.

If this Anſwer ſhould not be thought ſatisfactory, with reſpect to the Sufferings of good Men in this Life, what Account, in particular, ſhall we give of poor Infants, incapable of any actual Offence, or, who are, at moſt, involuntary Offenders, if they are really, in a juſt and proper Senſe, Criminal. For there is no Article, either in Natural or Revealed Religion, more difficult to be conceiv'd, than that there can be, ſtrictly ſpeaking, any Crime, and conſequently, any formal Puniſhment, where there has been no formal or previous Conſent of the Will.

How ſhall we then be capable of accounting for it, upon the common Principles of Juſtice, that Infants, who not having the uſe of Reaſon, cannot properly be conſider'd as moral Agents, ſhould live only, for a ſhort ſpace of Time, to ſuffer Torment and Miſery, to expreſs a Senſe of their Sufferings, and move Compaſſion by their lamentable Cries and Complaints, and at laſt to expire in the greateſt Agonies? Upon ſuppoſition, indeed, of a future State, an eaſy Account may be given of this Difficulty, and concerning others of the ſame kind, reſpecting Ideots, or Children of a more advanced Age, but, who dye before they attain to the free and proper uſe of the rational Faculties: Becauſe a Compenſation may hereafter be fully made to them, for all their preſent Sufferings; and God is not unjuſt, in proceeding with them after a manner,

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to which themſelves would have conſented, had the Conditions of it been *antecedently* propos'd to them.

The Concluſion, which I would now draw from both the foregoing Arguments, is, that whether we believe God to be a *Wiſe*, or a *Juſt* Governour of the World, there is an abſolute neceſſity of believing a Future State.

SECT. IV.

Whether a Future State can be directly proved from the Holineſs of God, or, the Notion of vindictive Juſtice.

IT has been an Argument, commonly employ'd, to prove a Future State, that a Holy God neceſſarily hates Sin, and, a Juſt God will neceſſarily puniſh it: And yet Sinners are ſo far from being the peculiar Objects of God's Hatred, or avenging Juſtice in this World, that they are frequently diſtinguiſh'd by many ſuperior Advantages, and ſometimes by all the viſible Glories of it: So that in order to a more full Diſcovery or Revelation of the Righteous Judgment of God, in reſpect to His vindictive Juſtice, it is ſuppoſed abſolutely requiſite that wicked Men ſhould be reſerved to a State of ſome more adequate and proper Puniſhment in another Life.

But, I ſhall not inſiſt upon this Argument, ſpecious as it may be thought, for the two following Reaſons.

1. Tho' all Men readily grant Sin to be the neceſſary Object of Hatred to a Holy God, it does not therefore follow, in the Opinion of ſome Men, that God ſhould immediately puniſh the Sinner, or at any time, upon that ſole Conſideration, if a Holy God puniſh by a neceſſity of Nature. For then, contrary to what happens every Day, in Fact, they argue, His Holineſs would always oblige Him neceſſarily to puniſh Sinners, ſo ſoon as they deſerve Puniſhment: For natural and neceſſary Powers, ſay they, act conſtantly with their full Force, and in a uniform manner: From whence it is inferred, that the Hatred of Sin does not always imply, nor, at any time, ſimply conſider'd, the Puniſhment of the Sinner. It is added, we need only conſult the ordinary Method, wherein we proceed with our Children, our Friends or Relations, to be informed, how much and how often we are inclined to diſtinguiſh between the Offence, and the Party offending; and how eaſily we ſometimes ſuſpend, or wholly remit Puniſhment in the later Caſe, while we diſcover very ſenſible Effects of our Reſentment or Diſpleaſure in the former.

2. It is farther argued, that tho' a juſt God may take occaſion, from the Sins and Offen-

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ces of Men, to puniſh; yet it does not therefore follow, that the Juſtice of God does oblige him to puniſh. The Civil Magiſtrate may juſtly take Advantage of thoſe Forfeitures, or actually inflict thoſe Penalties, which the Laws direct and award; nevertheleſs, it is thought, in certain Caſes, no diminution of his Juſtice, but a commendable Act of Clemency, to depart from his Right in both reſpects. Nay, ſuppoſing all the Ends of Civil Government could be otherwiſe attained, they will not admit, that the Civil Magiſtrate could puniſh Delinquents of any kind, upon a Principle of Juſtice purely vindictive.

Their reaſon is, that vindictive Juſtice, in Men, if it may not more properly be called the Wiſdom, than the Juſtice of Government, always ſuppoſes ſome great and original Imperfection in the Authors of it; as proceeding either from Fear or want of Power, or a deſire of revenging the Injuries, that have occaſion'd them ſome ſenſible Pain and Diſturbance. Except upon theſe, or the like Motives, with any of which it is impoſſible the Divine Nature ſhould be affected, no Prince, in this way of reaſoning, can be ſuppoſed capable of puniſhing the moſt obdurate and notorious Malefactors, and merely for the ſake of puniſhing.

Upon their Principles, the Supreme Governour of the World, tho' he has a Right of puniſhing Sinners, and may, if he

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ſees cauſe, juſtly puniſh them, yet may alſo ſuſpend the Exerciſe of that Right, wholly, or in part, where the Wiſdom, or other Reaſons of Government, do not require, that he ſhould puniſh.

It is not my preſent Buſineſs to inquire, whether this Opinion may be ſupported upon any clear or reaſonable Grounds: However, ſince ſeveral Perſons, who believe the Truth of Revealed Religion, and of the Chriſtian Revelation, in particular, have diſputed the neceſſity of a Juſtice, in God, purely vindictive, I was unwilling to make uſe here of any Argument from that Conſideration; leſt you ſhould object to me the Impropriety of arguing againſt Unbelievers, from a Principle, controverted among Chriſtians themſelves, and by ſome Chriſtians, of the firſt Diſtinction in the learned World.

And therefore, in proſecuting this Argument, I have choſen rather to inſiſt on the neceſſity that good Men, who are, at preſent, unhappy, ſhall be rewarded, than that wicked Men, who eſcape here with Impunity, ſhall be puniſhed in another Life: For there is a very wide and ſenſible difference between the Reaſons of executing Puniſhments, and of conferring Rewards. In not puniſhing Men, God is ſo far from doing them any Injury, or from dealing with them after a manner, which may give them juſt Cauſe of Complaint, that he exerciſeth an

an Act of Clemency, highly beneficial to them; neither is his remiſſion of Puniſhment, in any reſpect, injurious to himſelf. There can be no Charge of Injuſtice for remitting a Puniſhment, which may be juſtly inflicted, except (but that cannot have place in the Supreme Deity) where there is an antecedent Obligation to puniſh, either by virtue of ſome ſuperiour Authority, or indiſpenſable relative Obligation.

There would appear, on the other hand, to be a manifeſt Injury in witholding Rewards, that are neceſſary, towards a Vindication of the Divine Juſtice, and in order to ſupply the Difficiency of thoſe Appointments, which are made for good Men, in this Life; where their Happineſs is not even in a reciprocal proportion to the Miſery; but it had been better for them, not to have accepted the Conditions of Life, could we ſuppoſe thoſe Conditions had been previouſly tendred to them.

The Metaphyſical Notion, concerning the Goodneſs or Excellency of being in general, whereby ſome learned Men have endeavoured to prove, as well as they could, that it is better to be miſerable, than not to be, is of too nice and ſubtle Contexture to be oppoſed to the common Senſations which Men have of Pain and Miſery, eſpecially, in any violent degree, or of any long continuance. Nature, under ſevere Trials of this kind, proves

proves too ſtrong for a fine abſtracted Speculation, and is capable of receiving but very little comfort from ſuch dry and jejune Maxims.

SECT. V.

A Difficulty conſider'd, relating to the Sufferings of good Men in this Life.

SHould it ſtill be pretended, for I would leave no manner of Pretence on the other ſide of the Queſtion unexamin'd, that there is no Man ſo good in this Life, but he deſerves what he ſuffers, ſo that the Juſtice of God, is, notwithſtanding ſafe, tho' the Sufferings of good Men may here exceed the Benefits of Life; ſince what they ſuffer, is not to be conſider'd properly as a natural Conſequence of their being, but as a penal Judgment of God, occaſioned by an irregular uſe of their Liberty. God in not puniſhing others, who are equally, or more culpable, does them no wrong, becauſe being more arbitrary in the diſpoſal of his Favours, he may confer them in what manner, and upon what Perſons, he thinks fit. All Cauſe of Complaint is removed to thoſe with whom he proceeds, according to the Meaſures of ſtrict Juſtice,

Juſtice, how far ſoever he may extend the Acts of his Goodneſs or Mercy to others.

In anſwer to this, I deſire it may be conſider'd, that ſuch a procedure in God, towards good Men, tho' it might be reconciled with our Ideas of ſtrict Juſtice, yet it would be Juſtice, in the utmoſt rigour and extent of it. We cannot eaſily ſuppoſe, that under the Adminiſtration of a good and merciful God, they ſhould be the Objects, in particular, of his avenging Juſtice, who have moſt faithfully endeavoured to ſerve him, who are beſt diſpoſed to receive the Acts of his Goodneſs, and would improve them to the beſt Ends and Purpoſes. But,

2. Were ſuch a procedure perfectly reconcilable with our Ideas, not only of the Divine Juſtice, but, in every reſpect, of the Divine Mercy and Goodneſs; yet as it would tend to deſtroy the moſt ſtrong and powerful Motives to Obedience, in this Life, there could be no poſſible way of reconciling it with the Divine Wiſdom; for all wiſe Governors will diſpenſe Rewards and Puniſhments, in ſuch a manner, which may tend, at leaſt, to encourage a general Obedience, but which in no caſe may appear to countenance Rebellion or Diſobedience: And yet, conſidering the promiſcuous Events of Life, to wicked and good Men, if the Advantage does not frequently lie, and at certain Conjunctures, by a vaſt diſparity on the wrong

Side, the Motives to Virtue, from the preſent Conveniences of it, will be commonly found too weak, for the Difficulties, and Dangers, wherewith it is attended.

Whatever, therefore, a juſt God may poſſibly do, according to the Plenitude of his Power, and the ſtricteſt Demands of Juſtice, yet it would be impious to preſume, that a Good, that a Wiſe, and a Holy God, ſhould ever chuſe to execute Juſtice, in a way which might openly tend to encourage Men in Wickedneſs, and the Breach of his Laws. It is far more reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that, ſhould there be no proper Retributions to good Men, in a Future State, God would rather reward their preſent Obedience, by ſome viſible Interpoſitions of his Providence, than proceed according to the utmoſt ſeverity of Juſtice, in puniſhing their Failures: At leaſt he would put ſo viſible a diſtinction between wicked and good Men, in this Life, as might render the practice of Virtue, not only in general, but to every particular Perſon, more conducing to the preſent Advantages of this World, than a vicious and irregular courſe of Life: For the Attributes of God are always to be explained, not as interfering with one another, but as acting in perfect concert, and after the moſt uniform and harmonious manner.

SECT.

SECT. VI.

Concerning the Immortality *of the Soul.*

I Have done, Sir, with my Arguments relating to a Future State; which it was my endeavour to propoſe, in a Method, agreeable to your Deſire, of ſtrict Argumentation, or, as you expreſs your ſelf, in other Terms, according to Evidence, and Evidence only. I ſhall obſerve the ſame Method, in the Structure of my Arguments, upon the great Subject, now to be conſider'd, the *Immortality of the Soul*; concerning which, I ſhall firſt previouſly enquire, whether the Soul, a reaſonable Soul, for of that I ſpeak, be an immaterial Subſtance. Secondly, Whether upon a Conceſſion, that it is an immaterial Subſtance, one good Proof of its Immortality may not be thence deduced.

SECT. VII.

Whether the Soul *be Immaterial.*

SInce we have no direct or intuitive Knowledge concerning the Eſſences of things, but only know them, ſo far as they can be known, by their different Powers or Properties. The way to be ſatisfied, whether the Soul be immaterial, is to enquire, whether thoſe Powers of Cogitation and Liberty, wherewith it is endowed, can be the Powers of any material Subſtance. We aſſert, they cannot be ſo; becauſe, there is no ſuch thing, as Underſtanding, or a Capacity of willing, contained in the Idea of Matter: And we can only argue, concerning the Nature of Things, from the Ideas which we have of them.

When we would, in the firſt place, joyn Matter and Thought together, in our Minds, there is no neceſſary, no viſible relation between them, nor a poſſibility of conceiving any: They are incompatible, as midnight Darkneſs, or a Darkneſs, *which may be felt*, and the Light of the Meridian Sun.

That Matter, as ſuch, is not capable of thinking, all Philoſophers are now agreed. If Matter,

Matter, therefore, do think, it muſt be Matter modify'd, after a certain manner, or moved to a certain degree: But theſe are only Terms of amuſement, in the preſent enquiry, to cover the Ignorance of thoſe who employ them: They tend no more to forward our Conceptions of the Point in Diſpute, how Matter, whatever Dreſs or Modifications we give it, can think, than how Matter is capable of Thought, when perfectly naked, or at reſt.

The Matter about us, appears wholly ſtupid and ſenſeleſs; why then ſhould we ſuppoſe, that any Matter, or any Particles of Matter, playing in the Fibres of the Brain, ſhould have a Power of Cogitation appropriated to it? The only Ground for ſuch a Suppoſition is, we are actually conſcious to ourſelves, that we do think: But then we ſay, this Conſciouſneſs is a much better Argument to prove, that the Subject of Thought, in the Brain, whatever that be, is ſomething really diſtinct from material Subſtance, and not Matter, or any Power of it; ſince we ſee no like Effects, nor are able to diſcover the leaſt tendency towards them, in other Parts of Matter.

The different Situation, and Contexture of Things, do not alter the Nature or Properties of them: Matter is Matter ſtill, tho' of a finer Mould, or an Ingredient of a more curious and delicate Compoſition. It is impoſſible,

poſſible, by any Chymical Mixture or Preparation whatever, to extract reaſoning Spirits from it: The Particles it is capable of being reſolved into, may be rendred more ſubtle or mercurial, but they cannot ceaſe to be corporeal, and will, however refined, be, notwithſtanding, as incompatible with the Idea of Thought, as a Stone, or a Wedge of Iron.

I ſhall not here diſpute, whether God may poſſibly add a Power of thinking to Matter, of which Matter is not in the Nature of it capable. It is not conſiſtent with the high veneration which Man's Intellect owes to God, that he ſhould preſume to determine, in Caſes of Difficulty, what God can, or can not do: Tho' if God might poſſibly add a Power of Thinking to Matter, it ſeems a neceſſary concluſion, that this Power is not a mere Quality or Accident adhering to Matter, but an active Principle diſtinct from Matter, which, according to the moſt clear, obvious and diſtinct Ideas, we have of it, is always a *paſſive* Subject; ſo that ſtill, Matter ſtrictly ſpeaking, would not think, but the Power, whatever that may be, which is ſuperadded to it.

Beſides, it does not become Philoſophers, thoſe, eſpecially, who affect the Name of Free-Thinkers, to appeal, upon every Difficulty to Omnipotence, and to ſeek a Refuge for their Ignorance in it: It is their avowed

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Buſineſs and Profeſſion, to argue from the Nature and common Appearances of Things. But if in our Inquiries, concerning the Operation of intelligent Beings, there is, after all, a neceſſity that we ſhould have recourſe to Almighty Power, to the End we may be extricated out of Doubt; and there is no other Way to this End, but to argue from Poſſibilities to Facts; were this really the Caſe, yet, why may not God rather be ſuppos'd to create a thinking immaterial Subſtance, than to render Matter contrary to the Nature, and to all our Ideas of it, a thinking Principle?

Upon the former Suppoſition, if we have no clear expreſs Idea of immaterial Subſtance, neither are we able to diſcover any repugnancy, in the Nature of the Thing, between ſuch a Subſtance, and Thought: But, in the latter Caſe, we obſerve, ſo far as it is poſſible for any thing to fall under our Obſervation, a direct repugnancy between the Subject and the Property which is ſuppoſed to adhere, or to be annex'd to it, by the poſitive Will of God.

To ſay, that all Subſtance is Corporeal, which is the *only* thing that can be ſaid, againſt the *poſſibility* of immaterial Subſtance, is to maintain, by neceſſary conſequence, the moſt ſhocking and contradictory Propoſition, that the Supreme Deity is corporeal; that He is, therefore, a paſſive, mutable, a limited, impotent, and diviſible Being. For theſe

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are the Affections of Matter, and of all Matter, according to the beſt Teſtimony we can have, from Senſe, Reaſon, or Experience, tho', ſhould there be really any Part or Syſtem of Matter, in the World, to which one or more of theſe Affections might not belong, yet any one of them being ſufficient to deſtroy the Idea of infinite Perfection, would for that reaſon deſtroy the Idea of God.

If Matter thinks, Thought muſt either reſult from a Combination of ſeveral Particles of it diſpoſed after a certain order, or, from ſome one individual Particle of it. If Thought ariſes from a Combination of ſeveral Particles of Matter, no Account can be given, how we ſhould only have a ſimple Apprehenſion or Idea of any thing propoſed to the Underſtanding. If, for inſtance, a Man ſees a Stone, the Image of this Stone muſt ſtrike every Atom of his Brain in particular, which has a Power of Perception; and ſo he would ſee not one Stone, but as many Stones at once, as there are Atoms moving in his intellectual Syſtem; otherwiſe it will be neceſſary, ſome one Atom ſhould be detached from the reſt, to make a report of what has been obſerved. Yet were there a poſſibility of conceiving how any Atom, in particular, could be Commiſſioned, to this End, it might ſtill be queſtioned, upon an Hypotheſis, which may be demonſtrated, that Matter is infinitely diviſible, whether ſuch an Atom would convey,

convey, not a ſingle Image of a Stone, but Images of it multiplied to an infinite Number. If we attend to the Nature and Force of this Argument, it appears to be a very juſt conſequence, that whatever is the Principle of Thought, as it denotes ſimple apprehenſion in Man, muſt be itſelf ſomething ſimple, uncompounded, and indiviſible; and therefore immaterial, ſince nothing can be be ſo, that is material.

Another Argument to prove, that Matter cannot think, is taken from the immediate Object of Thought, which, whatever the exterior or occaſional Object of it may be, is always ſomething immaterial. When I think, to reſume the former Inſtance, of a Stone, this Thought does not impart any material Exiſtence of a Stone in my Mind, but only an abſtract Idea or Image of a Stone.

It will be ſaid, perhaps, that tho' the whole Subſtance, or ſolid Contents of the Stone, without the Mind, in not really within it, yet certain material Particles, flowing continually, and, on all ſides, from it, and ſtriking upon the Organs of the Eye, or of ſeveral Eyes at once, may paint upon the Optick Nerves ſome ſimilar Image of it, which may by that means be communicated to the Mind, and be proportionably greater or leſs, according to the different Poſition, or Magnitude of the external Object.

I ſhall have occaſion to ſhew, more at large afterwards, that the Images, which we form of external Objects in the Mind, or, whereby we perceive them, neither are, nor poſſibly *can* be material Images.

But having deliver'd my Thoughts upon this Subject, in another place, I ſhall only beg leave, at preſent, to recite what I have ſaid in one Paragraph relating to it.

" It may be queſtion'd, whether all our " Ideas of Corporeal Beings, are not formed " in our Minds, not from any Power they " have in themſelves to excite in us ſuch " Ideas, from our ſight of them, or any o- " ther ſenſible way of Conveyance; but only " occaſionally, in conſequence of the Laws " of Union between our Souls and Bodies; " whereby God has determin'd, that ſuch noti- " ces ſhall be produced in the Mind, according " to certain Impreſſions made on our bodily " Organs: For there cannot, in the natural " reaſon of the thing, be any account given " of the Likeneſs or Reſemblance which the " Modes of a Spiritual Subſtance bear to " thoſe of a Corporeal Subſtance; or, how " certain material Images ſhould be commu- " nicated to the Mind, ſo as to excite Ideas " in it of a nature correſponding to them; " but either upon the Hypotheſis of our ſee- " ing all things in God, or elſe from a Power " in our ſelves, on occaſion of external Ob- " jects, to modify the Soul, after ſuch a " manner

" manner, as may ſerve to convey to it pro-
" per and diſtinct Reſemblances of them.
" The former of theſe Notions has not ge-
" nerally obtain'd, and yet the more ſtrictly
" it is examin'd, it will perhaps be found a
" more intelligible way of accounting how
" the Mind comes to the Notice of Corpo-
" real Objects, than any other Method, which
" thoſe, who decry it, will ever be able to
" aſſign; except, that which I have menti-
" oned, which yet is not without its diffi-
" culties; namely, that God has implanted a
" Power in the Mind, of forming Ideas in
" itſelf, by occaſion of certain ſenſible Ob-
" jects, which yet are not the Matter, out
" of which they are properly or directly
" formed.

And if the immediate Object of Thought be ſomething immaterial, ſince all Acts and Effects follow the nature of their reſpective Subjects, it will not only follow, that the Soul, the Subject of Thought, is immaterial, but if it have a Power of modifying itſelf in ſuch a manner, ſo as to produce its own Ideas; it may be farther inferred, that ſomething may poſſibly be produced out of nothing. Except it ſhould be pretended, that Thought is really nothing, or that to carry on the former Inſtance, when a Stone is the Object of my Thought, I have yet no manner of Perception or Idea of a Stone, or of any thing in my Mind; for what is not, cannot be perceived.

To give the greater Force to what may be pretended, on the other ſide, that the Matter of our Thoughts is ſomething Corporeal, I have choſen to found my Argument, upon a viſible, a particular, and material Object, which yet is capable of much additional Strength and Illuſtration, from univerſal and abſtract, from metaphyſical and even moral Notions; For tho' it may be pretended, that from the Order and Relation, from the Inequality or Diſproportion between Bodies, ſome imperfect Idea of Virtue or Vice, and in the particular Inſtances of them, may be deduced; yet it will not be pretended, that regular Deductions of this kind can be made by any material Particles or Emanations, communicated from external Objects to the Mind. Nay, the very Terms, Order, and Relation, Inequality and Diſproportion, do not denote any thing poſitive in thoſe Beings, to which they are applied, but only a different manner of their exiſting, upon which theſe different mental Denominations are founded; and conſequently, ſince nothing can communicate, what it has not, they cannot communicate from Bodies any thing poſitive, or material, to the Mind.

SECT.

SECT. VIII.

That Matter is incapable of Liberty.

BUt admitting, Sir, againſt all theſe Arguments, that Matter is really capable of Thought, either in the Nature of it, or from ſome Power ſuperadded to it by God, and a Power not actually diſtinct from it; this Conceſſion would however be of no Service to your Cauſe, ſo long as we are able to prove that Matter is ſtill incapable of Liberty.

Free-Thinking is what you particularly contend for, and by which you deſire to be denominated; but, if the Soul be material, it is abſolutely impoſſible there ſhould be any ſuch thing as Liberty, and conſequently, any freedom either of Thought or Action: Except Choice and Conſtraint, Liberty and Neceſſity, may be ſuppoſed indifferently to ſignify the ſame thing.

1. Matter, in the firſt place, is ſo far from having a Power of determining its own Motions, that it cannot put itſelf in Motion: It impelleth and is impelled, moves this way, or any way, according to the Direction given to it; it is accelerated, ſtopped or retarded,

as

as the Situation will admit, wherein it ſtands, towards other Parts of Matter, which preſs upon it, and wherewith it is continually ſurrounded; ſo that unleſs we could aſſign an Effect without a Cauſe, a Suppoſition which all Philoſophers have complain'd of as moſt unphiloſophical and abſurd, and particularly *Cicero*, in the preſent Caſe; we muſt be oblig'd to have recourſe to ſome prior and original Cauſe of Motion diſtinct from Matter, and by virtue of whoſe Power Matter firſt began to move: If the continual Circulation of it, which we now obſerve, wherein Bodies alternately follow and puſh one another, be not rather a repeated Act, than a ſtated providential Effect of the ſame Power.

2. If Matter have a Power of moving itſelf, it muſt have a Power of moving every way, or but of one, or more determinate ways. A Power in Matter of moving, every way muſt keep it perpetually at reſt: The Endeavour being equal, and a juſt Ballance of the moving Force being preſerv'd, on every Side, it muſt neceſſarily, and for ever, remain unmoved, in the place wherein it is. A Power of moving one or more determinate ways, not only deſtroys the Hypotheſis, that Motion is Eſſential to Matter; but what I would particularly obſerve at preſent, it deſtroys all Freedom, if there be nothing but Matter and Motion in the World, both of acting and thinking

thinking. How can we, in particular, be ſaid to think freely of any Subject, or to judge of it according to Evidence, when we are confined to think and judge of it in that determinate way, which, (if you will make *them* the Inſtruments of Thought and Judgment) the courſe of the Animal Spirits, over which we have no Power, ſhall direct.

Beſides, this Philoſophical Argument, againſt a Capacity of Free-Thinking, in Matter, there is another of a moral Conſideration, which, if we will not allow to be concluſive, there is an end at once of the diſtinction between Virtue and Vice, and of all Juſtice and Honour; in ſhort, of all Morality, and of all Rewards and Puniſhments, conſider'd properly as ſuch, in this Life, or the next.

It appears to be one of the moſt evident and inconteſtable Truths in the World, that our Actions are no farther morally Good or Evil, nor indeed our Thoughts, than they are voluntary: Virtue and Vice may as properly be attributed to a Tree, when it produceth good or unwholſome Fruit, as to a Man, becauſe he thinks or acts after a manner, concerning which he is previouſly determined to think or act, and by a neceſſity of Nature.

I do no here ſpeak, in reſpect to ſuch acquir'd Habits of Virtue or Vice, which bring Men, under a certain conſtraint of performing good or evil Actions; as to which, tho' they have

have not that perfect freedom of Choice, which they had originally, they are ſtill moral Agents, and are in a different meaſure virtuous or criminal, as thoſe Habits were firſt occaſion'd or form'd, through a better uſe, or greater abuſe of their Liberty. But I ſpeak on ſuppoſition, that Man has really no liberty of choice, which, if the Soul be material, he cannot be conceived to have, in any Caſe, or on any Account whatever.

Try, if you can, once more, to form any Idea, how a Principle, in the Nature of it Paſſive, and which of it ſelf has no Motion, ſhould be able either to act or move; or, if you can have any confus'd Conception, how it ſhould act or move, try, in the next place, if you can conceive, how a blind and ſenſeleſs Principle, ſhould act or move *freely*, ſo as to determine its choice this way, or that way, or any way.

And, if there be no Liberty of Choice, all Mankind, in reſpect to Morals, are equal, and exactly upon a level. They who betray the Truſt repoſed in them, they who oppreſs and deſtroy, who corrupt and are corrupted, act, in the nature of the thing, as juſt, as honeſt and honourable a part, as they who regulate themſeves by thoſe Meaſures, to which the Reputation of Juſtice is now, by common conſent, affix'd.

Which

Which of these two Distinctions of Men are most beneficial to Society, and ought to be most encourag'd and valu'd in it, is not the Point in question, but which of them is preferable, or intrinsically better, in a moral Sense? Upon this Enquiry, as they are both of them necessary Agents, they stand upon the same foot, tho' consider'd in relation to Society, there may be a vast disparity between them.

As there is, in a proper Sense, no Virtue or Vice, but what is founded in Liberty; neither can there be, strictly speaking, any such thing, as Reward or Punishment, here or hereafter, but upon this Principle: What Consideration, can any one deserve for an Action, which he was under an absolute and antecedent necessity of performing; or why should he be punish'd, either for doing what he could not possibly avoid, or for omitting to do what confessedly was not in his Power? But, if external Rewards and Punishments might, notwithstanding, in a Sense, be allow'd to Men, as their Actions, tho' neither Good nor Evil in themselves consider'd abstractedly, have yet a visible influence upon the good or ill State of Society, there could be still no true or real ground, but only in popular Opinion, for Blame or Praise, for good Report or evil Report: And as to any internal Principle of Conscience, if Man is a necessary Agent, there could be no imagina-

ble Ground or Foundation for it. No Man can ever reproach or applaud himſelf, or be reproached or applauded by others, for an Act, wherein he had no choice, except in the ſame Senſe, wherein he may be reproached or applauded for an irregular or fine Shape, for the ſtrength or weakneſs of his Body, or becauſe he was born of poor Parents, or to a good Eſtate.

So that this Argument to prove, that the Soul is immaterial, from the Nature of Liberty, may be indifferently applied to thoſe, who either aſſert a Power of Self-Motion to Matter, or who deny the Morality of Human Actions. The former Principle, on ſuppoſition there is nothing but Matter and Motion in World, deſtroys the very Name and Notion of Free-Thinking: To deny the moral diſtinction of Good and Evil, renders a Man unfit for Human Society or Converſation, and incapable either of Pain or Pleaſure, from the Reflexions of his own Mind, or in a ſtrict Senſe, of Reward and Puniſhment, of Blame or Applauſe, from other Men.

You may ſtill perhaps object, that it is difficult to account, how any Being can have a Power of determining its own Motions; whether we ſuppoſe it a material or immaterial Being.

To which I would Anſwer, that where Difficulties lye, on both ſides of a Queſtion, we

we ought to conclude on that ſide of it which is attended with the feweſt, and where the Preſumptions of Probability and Truth appear the ſtronger.

The more we conſider the Nature and Properties of Matter, the leſs able we are to diſcover a Power either of Self-Motion, or of Choice in it. There is a viſible repugnancy between our Ideas, and all the known, or conceivable Affections of it: But our Ignorance of the manner, how an immaterial Being determines its own Acts or Volitions, does not proceed from any Contrariety which the Idea of ſuch a Being bears to the Nature of it, but only from the manner of its Operation.

Now there is a mighty difference between the Judgments which we form concerning the Nature and the known Properties of Things: We may be ſatisfied concerning the Truth and Exiſtence of a thouſand things, and yet be intirely ignorant how they are modify'd; or what may be their ſecret internal Springs or Powers of Action, and yet we may certainly know, at the ſame time, of what Powers they are not capable. We may be able, for inſtance, to judge from all the known Appearances of Matter, what it cannot do, and yet not be able to determine how, or after what manner, immaterial Subſtance operates, tho' we are aſſured of its Operation. In ſhort, it is one thing to

know, that Matter is incapable of thinking or chuſing, and another thing not to know, how an immaterial Being can think or chuſe.

So that all the Objections againſt Liberty, are only to be conſidered as Difficulties, that afford matter of Speculation to Philoſophers, but do not affect the Truth of the Thing. For beſides what has been ſaid to ſhew the neceſſity of Liberty, in order to morality, to the Reaſons of Rewards and Puniſhments, of Blame and Praiſe, and the good or ill Reports of Conſcience, all which are only Terms of Amuſement, if we deny Liberty; beſides this, we are conſcious to our ſelves, that we have a power over our own Thoughts and Volitions, as much as over any part of the Body, and in many Caſes, that we have a greater Power. Now, if it be an Argument to me, that I have a Power of moving my Hand, becauſe my Hand moves, ſo ſoon, as I will the Motion of it; why ſhould it not prove with equal certainty that I had a power to will that Motion, or at that ſame time not to will it? Since on other like Occaſions, I can arbitrarily determine my Will, either way: And I know from an inward Conſciouſneſs, I can do ſo, as diſtinctly, and upon as clear Evidence as I am capable of knowing any thing. For where ſhall we ſeek for the grounds of Certainty, or Evidence, if we know not, what we have an internal Perception of, by the Light of our own Minds, and what we *feel?*

SECT.

SECT. IX.

Whether, ſuppoſing the Soul immaterial, the Immortality of it will therefore follow.

BUT ſtill it may be queſtioned, admitting that the Soul is immaterial, and that the proofs of this Doctrine are certainly concluſive, as without doubt they are, if there be any ſuch thing in the World, as certainty from philoſophical Principles; whether it will follow after all, that the Soul is therefore immortal? For tho' the Subſtance of it may not be annihilated when the Body dies, it may poſſibly ſtill remain in a ſtate of Inaction, and totally ceaſe to exerciſe thoſe Powers and Faculties, by which it operates at preſent; as the ſubſtance of the Body remains, tho' in broken or diſſipated Particles after Death, yet wholly ceaſes from that time, to perform its vital Functions.

We may reply, in Anſwer to what is here objected, that ſince the Death of the Body, and a Ceſſation of its vital Powers proceed from a ſeparation of the Parts which compoſed it; and as this Reaſon does not ſubſiſt in reſpect to the Soul, we muſt ſeek for ſome

other

other Reaſon, if that can be found, why the powers of the Soul, when it is ſeparated from the Body, ſhould alſo be ſuppoſed to ceaſe.

To ſay, that God will deſtroy the powers of the Soul, after Death, by a poſitive Act of his Will, is to ſay, a thing without proof, or any reaſonable grounds of preſumption. To ſay, the powers of the Soul will be deſtroyed, of courſe, upon the diſſolution of the corporeal Frame, is an Aſſertion equally precarious; except, it could be proved, that the Operations of an immaterial Being depend upon its being united to ſome Corporeal Being: and, that it is neceſſary, tho' Matter cannot think; yet, the Being which does think, ſhould receive its Ideas by occaſion of ſenſible Impreſſions. But what can be the Foundation of ſo unaccountable and irrational a Conjecture? For according to the moſt clear and diſtinct Ideas, which we have of Body and Spirit, there neither is, nor can be any Communication between Body and Spirit, but what depends on the poſitive Will of God. The Body then is not the Cauſe, but only the Occaſion, and that alone, by virtue of the divine Will, of exciting certain Thoughts in the Soul. The true Cauſe therefore, or principle of Thought inherent in the Soul, will ſtill ſubſiſt, when that Occaſion is removed; at leaſt no philoſophical Argument can be produced to ſhew, why it ſhould

ſhould not ſtill ſubſiſt; but there are very good Reaſons from the Divine Attributes, to evince, why it ſhould ſubſiſt.

SECT. X.

Direct Proofs of the Soul's Immortality, from a Conſideration of the divine Attributes of Wiſdom and Goodneſs. And firſt from the Wiſdom of God.

WE have before ſufficiently demonſtrated from the wiſdom of God, as the Legiſlator, and from his Juſtice, as the Creator of Mankind, the neceſſity of believing a future State in order to a Vindication of theſe divine Attributes. But we have already granted, with reſpect to the latter of them, the juſtice of God, that the Immortality of the Soul in a future State cannot be evidently deduced from it, ſimply conſidered: Becauſe a determinate ſpace of Time, in a future State, whether of Happineſs or Miſery, may poſſibly be ſufficient to anſwer all the Ends of divine Juſtice. Neither will it follow directly, that becauſe the wiſdom of God, in his character of Legiſlator, requires, that his Laws here ſhould be enforced, by the propoſal of future Rewards and Puniſhments, that

that thoſe Rewards and Puniſhments ſhould be of endleſs Continuance; becauſe the expectation of exquiſite Pains or Pleaſures for a limited Time, according to the good or evil Actions of Men at preſent, after which a Period ſhould be put to them, might be of ſufficient Force to ſecure their preſent Obedience.

Tho' a good Argument therefore, may be drawn from the Wiſdom of God, that the Soul is immortal; yet this Argument is founded upon a Conſideration of the Divine Wiſdom, in a different reſpect from that beforementioned: As will ſufficiently appear from the Nature, and the Progreſs of it.

I need not here repeat, or enforce what has been ſaid, to ſhew, that the Soul is immortal, as Immortality is oppoſed to Corruption, or a diſſolution of ſeparable Parts. If the Soul does therefore ceaſe to exiſt after this life, it muſt either be, becauſe God will then deſtroy it by a poſitive Act of his Power, or by withdrawing the ordinary concourſe of his Providence from it, by which it is preſerved in Being; or becauſe, ſuppoſing that Concourſe continued, the Soul in a ſeparate State, will be incapable of having or of exerciſing thoſe Powers and Faculties, wherewith it is now endowed.

SECT.

SECT. XI.

That God will not, either by a poſitive Act of his Power, deſtroy the Soul, or withdraw the ordinary Concourſe of his Providence from it, after Death.

BUT upon what grounds can we in the firſt place infer, that God ſhould at any time, either by his poſitive Will deſtroy the Soul, or withdraw the ordinary Concourſe of his Providence from it, and ſo by either of theſe Means annihilate it. The Action of God muſt always be preſumed to bear the Character of his Attributes; and Wiſdom is one of thoſe Attributes. But it ought not to be ſuppoſed, that a wiſe Agent will be the Cauſe of deſtroying his own Work; a Work which contributes towards the Advancement of his Glory, one of the moſt excellent and conſiderable of all his Works; and, when no good or pertinent Reaſon can be aſſigned why He ſhould deſtroy it.

You will ſay perhaps, God may poſſibly deſtroy the Soul, either by withdrawing from it, his common Concurrence, or if that be not ſufficient, by a poſitive Act of his Will, for many Reaſons unknown to us, tho' the

Soul might otherways be for ever capable of ſubſiſting.

This is a dark way of Reaſoning, (and which will be admitted in no other Caſe) to argue, againſt the natural Frame and Conſtitution of Things, from human Ignorance; and upon a Suppoſition of what infinite Power may poſſibly do, for reaſons impoſſible to be known.

But it leaſt of all becomes a Free-thinker to put future Caſes, upon a poſſibility of what may happen in his reſearches concerning the natural State and Reaſon of Things. God may perhaps by virtue of his almighty Power do ſo and ſo, or there may be certain occult Reaſons from the divine Oeconomy, why after all God ſhould do ſo; we have no clear Demonſtration to the contrary.

In this way of arguing, no Argument can conclude. Unknown Powers, Properties, and Poſſibilities may ſtill be objected to the cleareſt Evidence; and if conſequences can be drawn from them, againſt the ordinary Appearances of Things, an end will be put to all philoſophical Enquiries at once, concerning the Reaſons of them; ſo that there can be no Scope for any Method of human Ratiocination, which is not ſtrictly and viſibly demonſtrative. But tho' we cannot pretend to ocular Demonſtration in the Preſent Argument, we have on our ſide of the Queſtion, the higheſt Probabilities, and moſt reaſonable grounds of Preſumption; and not ſo much as

one

one Reaſon, or pretence of Argument againſt us, but that poor Retreat of a broken and diſtreſſed Cauſe, poſſibly it may be otherways, *and who can tell?*

We have, Sir, I ſay, ſeveral Reaſons why God ſhould not annihilate any Thing, but not one good Reaſon, ever has been, or can be produced, why he ſhould? We therefore who affirm, that God will not annihilate the Soul of Man, have not only the right of Poſſeſſion on our ſide, (which of itſelf is a good Right, where there is no Oppoſition, or Reaſon againſt it) but a Right directly ſupported by many good Reaſons; ſome of which, leſt I ſhould be thought to ſpeak this precariouſly, I ſhall now offer to your Conſideration.

1. To create is an Act of Omnipotence; an Act worthy of God, to which (as all his Actions are regulated by infinite Wiſdom) Counſel and Deliberation, are ſuppoſed, previous. To ſurmiſe therefore that God ſhould by any Means undoe, or employ his Power to undoe, what was the effect both of his Power and Wiſdom, is tacitly to charge his Conduct with a Mutability, which in honour to the perfection of his Nature, ought not to be attributed to him. Children in raiſing Bubbles upon the Water, for the pleaſure of the Exerciſe or Action, which contributes to raiſe them, and that of ſeeing them immediately vaniſh, produce an Effect, as to the

manner and duration of it agreeable to the Nature of the Cauſe. But the Deſign of God, in producing, by his Action, a reaſonable Soul, which after a few Moments ſhould for ever vaniſh, and loſe itſelf in the empty Abyſs, out of which his infinite Power raiſed it, is a Deſign unworthy of ſo glorious and godlike an Action. It does not become Omnipotence to change the Object of it, or make and unmake any thing, except for Reaſons of Wiſdom, if ſuch poſſibly can be found, ſuperior to thoſe of his Wiſdom and Glory in making it, and in preſerving it when made. For it ought to be conſider'd,

2. That the things which God has made are not only good abſolutely conſider'd, but in their relative Uſe, as they ſtand in dependence upon the reſt of the Creation, and are ſubſervient in the Place and Office aſſigned them, to the Beauty, the Order, Influence, and other general Ends of it. And as every Action of God is in Number, Weight and Meaſure, and there is ſo neceſſary and harmonious a Communication, of one Part with another, throughout the whole Syſtem, no part of it can be deſtroyed without ſome viſible Diſorder, or Deficiency in the whole Syſtem.

It is the Character of weak and ignorant Man, in contriving his Work, the Scheme for inſtance of a Hiſtory, not to have a full and adequate Comprehenſion at once, of all the Facts, Memoirs, or Characters relating to it.

For

For which Reaſon he is ſometimes obliged to alter his Model, to go backwards and forwards, to do and undo, to add and obliterate, as ſome better Method, ſome new Light, or Matter may direct.

But the infinitely wiſe Being, who has a comprehenſive View of all Things, and of all incidents at once, who acts by the moſt ſimple Laws and *whoſe Work is always perfect*, cannot be ſuppoſed on any Occaſion to alter his original Deſign, or to have any need either of ſubſtracting the Parts of it, which are already made, or for the addition of new Parts, whatever his Goodneſs (for we ought not to limit the Effects of this Attribute) may incline him to do in the later reſpect.

3. Beſides this Reaſon from the beautiful and regular dependence among created Beings, that from the Glory of the Creator ought to be diſtinctly conſidered. For as his Attributes of Power, Wiſdom and Goodneſs were glorify'd by the things which are made, theſe Attributes are no leſs, if they are not rather more eminently diſcover'd, by his perſerving Providence: Eſpecially in reſpect to thoſe reaſonable Beings who are capable of glorifying him by direct Acts of Praiſe, Homage, and Thankſgiving, and are the moſt noble Monuments of his Glory.

4. If we argue from what we are able to obſerve concerning the divine Conduct towards the Creatures, there is no Inſtance throughout the whole Syſtem of created Beings,

ings, of Annihilation, or of any thing like it. We often obſerve, indeed, a conſiderable Change in the Figure, the Colour, and Situation of Bodies, with great variety of other different Modes, which give them very different Appearances. The Face of Nature in the Revolution of a few Months ſeems to be wonderfully alter'd; ſhe begins conſtantly at certain Seaſons of the Year to loſe her Complexion, to languiſh and decay, and, then upon the periodical return of the Sun to revive, and by degrees to look freſh, ſmiling, and beautiful as ever.

But theſe Changes in Nature whether more general or particular, only affect the manner of corporeal Beings, not their Subſtance. The fartheſt any Change can go is to ſeparate or tranſpoſe the Parts, whereof Bodies are compounded, in the manner which we expreſs by Corruption: Which yet only ſerves to generate ſomething in the place of it, and equally ſubſervient to the Ends of the whole Syſtem in common.

Beſides theſe general Reaſons to ſhew, why we ought not to ſuppoſe, God will withdraw his ordinary Concourſe from the Soul of Man, or by any means annihilate it, we may farther argue to this End, from the two following Conſiderations.

1. From the general Expectations of Men, concerning a future Life. And

2. From the natural and invincible deſire of Happineſs implanted in all Men.

SECT.

SECT. XII.

That the Soul ſhall not be annihilated after Death argued, 1. *From the Expectations of Men concerning a future Life.*

1. IT is agreeable to the general Expectations of Men, that there ſhould be a future Life. I do not here inquire, how we come to have generally a Notion of this kind, and whether there may not be ſome particular Perſons who have no ſuch Notion, or who have reaſon'd themſelves into a Disbelief of a future Life: But the Point which I conſider at preſent is, that in Fact Men do generally believe, there is a future Life. The ſame Proofs, which *Cicero* has urged in his *Tuſculan Queſtions*, from the Belief and religious Rites of Worſhip in ſeveral Parts of the World, which he there enumerates, will ſtill hold good. And however this Belief is propagated, yet if it indifferently obtains among the more rude, and illiterate, the more wiſe and knowing Part of Mankind among thoſe, who are better diſpoſed to entertain it, and even among thoſe, who do all they can to deſtroy it, then if we may be able to judge, concerning a natural Principle,

Principle, or the Force of it in any Caſe, the Expectation of a Life after this ſeems evidently founded in a natural Principle; but which the wiſe Author of Nature would never have implanted in the Minds of Men, were it only to ſerve as a means of Error or Illuſion, unto them.

SECT. XIII.

From the natural and invincible deſire of Happineſs implanted in all Men.

2. YET ſhould not this Argument for a future Life be really concluſive of itſelf, or for a future immortal Life, or ſhould it be diſputed, whether the Expectations of Men be here either ſo general or natural concerning it, as we have endeavoured to repreſent: There can however be no diſpute, whether the deſire of Happineſs in Men is both natural, and univerſal. Can we poſſibly account for it, that an allwiſe Agent ſhould implant ſuch ſtrong and natural Deſires in Beings endowed with Reaſon, when thoſe Deſires have yet no reaſonable Grounds, and he has provided no ſuitable Gratification for them. The deſire of being happy is not leſs natural, than the great Principle of Self-preſervation, the deſire of Being in general; nay, Men

Men may be ſuppoſed under Circumſtances, wherein Annihilation would really be more eligible to them, than Being. But no Circumſtances can abſolutely deſtroy the deſire of being happy; the very choice of Annihilation in order to prevent the inſupportable Miſeries of Life, virtually ſuppoſes that Deſire, and can only proceed from it.

But now, to give the Queſtion its full Force, if a deſire of being happy, and of being *always* happy, be a fruitleſs deſire, and has really no Object to anſwer it, then it is a mere deluſory Deſire, and was made in vain; and therefore could not be made by the Author of Nature, who does nothing in vain. And yet it is a natural deſire, or no Proof can poſſibly be produced of any thing in the World, that is natural.

SECT. XIV.

A Difficulty obviated from the fruitleſs or impracticable Deſires of Men in this Life.

NO Anſwer can be given to this, but by ſaying, tho' we naturally deſire many things, it does not therefore follow from a Conſideration either of the Wiſdom or Good-

neſs of God, that he is obliged to gratify our Deſires. If a Man deſire in an Inſtant to become learned and rich, or even by gradual Advances, it does not therefore follow that he ſhall immediately become learned or rich, or at any time: But it follows, which is a Conſequence ſufficient to our preſent Purpoſe, that there are ſuch things as Learning and Riches, and that they are proper and real Objects of Deſire. There needs no anſwer, as to the deſire of ſuch things, with which vain Man is ſometimes poſſeſs'd, that are contrary to the Order and Courſe of Nature; as if any one ſhould deſire to walk upon the Surface of the Water, or to fly in the Air. Deſires of this kind are not natural, nor conſequently reaſonable, becauſe Nature has not fitted Men for ſuch Actions: But the deſire of being happy and of being always happy is founded in Nature, and in one of the moſt ſtrong, general, and active Principles of it, and muſt therefore be ſuppoſed agreeable to our natural Capacities.

SECT.

SECT. XV.

An Answer to what is objected from the Desire, which Men commonly have of not dying in this World.

IT is urged more especially, that if the desire of a future immortal Life in a State of Happiness, be a good reason to induce our Belief of such a future Life; we may as reasonably conclude that the desire of not dying in this World, should be a good reason, why Men should never die. To this I answer,

1. That the desire of not dying, was (if Man had then such a desire) in his original State, natural; and supposed a natural union of Soul and Body, that should not be dissolved: That Desire might continue, after Man was fallen, tho' the reason of it ceased, from a perfect regular frame of Body, and happy disposition of Mind, which before qualify'd Man for such a State.

2. All the natural Desires of a reasonable Being, are reasonable. But it is unreasonable and contrary to the order of Nature, that a diseased, infirm, and frail Body, should not be subject to Death and Dissolution. And, on

that account it may be ſaid, that this Deſire, whatever it might have been originally, is not now, in a ſtrict Senſe, a natural Deſire. For natural Deſires are of ſuch things whereof Nature is capable, but never of ſuch things whereof created Beings, are in the very Frame and Conſtruction, of them, incapable.

3. The deſire of Life in this World, is a deſire of continuing in our preſent State, or a deſire of living here, ſo long as we can, provided we could always be happy, or at leaſt that the Miſeries of Life ſhould not exceed the Benefits of it: So that this Deſire, in the original Foundation of it, is the ſame with the deſire of being happy, and of being always happy. But in this reſpect, it is an irregular, and, ſo far, an unreaſonable Deſire, that the Happineſs which Nature prompts us ſo irreſiſtibly to purſue, is not to be found in this Life; that the longer we live, the leſs capable we become of taſting the Enjoyments of it, ſuch as they are, and that to ſeek for Life and Immortality here, is, therefore *to ſeek the Living among the Dead.* The plain Conſequence of which is, that the allwiſe Creator has ordain'd ſome *better things* for us in another World, where that Happineſs may be found, towards which we are carried with ſuch impatient Deſires in this World, but cannot find how diligently ſoever we ſeek it.

SECT.

SECT. XVI.

No Grounds for diſtinguiſhing, in the preſent Argument, between the Powers, and the Subſtance, of the Soul.

IT will be in vain to pretend here, againſt what I have ſaid in Particular, concerning the Reaſons why a wiſe Creator will not deſtroy his own Work. That his cauſing the Powers and Operations of the Soul to ceaſe after this Life, is not to deſtroy his own Work in the ſenſe, according to which we have explained thoſe Terms, or as it imports annihilation; becauſe the ſubſtance of the Soul may, notwithſtanding, be ſtill preſerved in Being.

But in this Caſe, I anſwer, there are no grounds for a diſtinction between the Subject, and the Properties attributed to it, they are both the work of God, and the Effects, the peculiar and incommunicable Effects of a divine Power. A faculty of thinking in the Soul is the Work indeed, ſo far as we can judge, concerning the Reaſons of the divine Conduct in relation to it, which the wiſdom of God appears more peculiarly concerned to preſerve: The Work, without which the Soul, could

could not properly be called a Soul; without which in reſpect to the nobleſt Ends, for which the Soul was created, it would be as uſeleſs a Part of the Creation, as if it had never been. What Notion can we poſſibly form, concerning the Ends and Uſes of an immaterial Subſtance, without a Capacity of acting, of thinking, or willing: But whether, without ſuch a Capacity, the Soul might be conceived ſubſervient to ſome general Ends of Providence; yet as to that Capacity, and thoſe Deſires, in particular, of Happineſs, with which it was endowed by the allwiſe Creator, it is the ſame thing, whether the ſubſtance of the Soul ſhould be annihilated, or if the vital Powers of it ſhould be intirely deſtroyed.

SECT. XVII.

Another Objection conſidered, from the Diſſolution of the corporeal Frame.

IT will be to as little purpoſe to object, that it is not thought inconſiſtent with the Wiſdom of God, that he ſhould deſtroy the vital Frame and Powers of the Body, while at the ſame time the Matter out of which the ſeveral Parts of the Body are compoſed,

poſed, do confeſſedly, ſtill continue in Being. So that it may be inferred from a plain and acknowledged Fact, that God does deſtroy his own Work, and the vital Powers of it; and therefore it is not abſolutely inconſiſtent with his Wiſdom that he ſhould deſtroy his own work.

1. It is not denied, God may, with the ſafety of this Attribute, *in certain caſes*, deſtroy his own Work, in ſuch Caſes particularly, where the Ends of his effecting that Work, are fully unanſwered; or where, in the natural conſtruction of his Work, God did not deſign it ſhould ſubſiſt any longer. The allwiſe Creator is not obliged, by any poſitive Act of his Will to conſerve thoſe Powers, which by his own appointment, are naturally to ceaſe and decay of themſelves, tho' according to the wiſe and general Laws of his Providence, thoſe Powers, and ſuch are the Powers of the Soul, which he has deſigned, under the general Concourſe of it, to continue ſtill in Being, ſhall *ever* continue to be.

This Life being the Scene of Action to the Body, where it grows, and decays, is ſubject to many Diſorders and adverſe Accidents, and at laſt to Death; it is not requiſite, God ſhould interpoſe by an extraordinary miraculous Power to prevent theſe natural Effects. The Ends of his Providence are fully anſwered, if the Body be here

here ſubject to thoſe Laws of it, which are proper to its natural State.

What Argument can be drawn, or upon what Parallel, upon what ſimilar Reaſon from hence, that the Powers of the Soul ſhall ceaſe in another Life? If we conſider the Capacities wherewith Man is created, he is not capable in this Life of any degree of Improvement or Perfection equal to them; whether in his Character of an intelligent Being, or of a moral Agent.

Were our Souls freed from all Commerce with corporeal Objects which here cloud and obſtruct the Operations of the Mind, and could we contemplate Truth with a ſingle and naked Eye; what ſurprizing Diſcoveries ſhould we be able to make concerning things which are now altogether, or in part, unknown to us. *Scarcely do we gueſs aright at the things which are ſeen*; we are forced to borrow helps from artificial Inſtruments to diſcover the exterior Frame and Contexture of ſenſible Objects: But we know little or nothing comparatively of the intellectual World, the nobleſt Scene of Contemplation to the Mind, and the knowledge whereof is moſt neceſſary to it's Perfection.

Again, were we freed from the Weight and Motions of Concupiſcence, which continually carry us, and often with an impulſe not eaſy to be reſiſted, toward the Creature; ſo that the Soul might act with a full and

regular

regular force, in its motions towards God, whom it was made to love and enjoy; how infinitely ſuperiour would the Happineſs and Perfection of it be above what it is poſſibly capable of attaining to in this frail and imperfect State? which is ſo far indeed from being a State of Perfection, that conſidering the noble Capacities of Man, and how admirably his Faculties are fitted towards attaining *the Things that are more excellent*, can ſcarce be called a School of Diſcipline and Improvement.

And from hence, a ſtrong Argument might incidentally be drawn, to ſhew farther, that there is another *State*, wherein the *perfection*, for which we are by Nature, or our natural Capacities, qualified, and towards the attainment of which, we are here able to make ſo very little progreſs, ſhall be finally attained.

For how ſhall we reconcile it with the Idea of an Agent, whoſe way is always perfect, that he ſhould leave a Work, the nobleſt and moſt excellent of his Works under Heaven, ſo unfiniſhed, ſo very unequal to the Hand which formed it, as he muſt neceſſarily do, ſuppoſing Man is not to paſs into any future State or Scene of Life?

This Argument will hold good with reſpect to the wiſeſt and the beſt of Men in this World. But what ſhall we ſay then to a great number of ſuch Infants, who die ſo ſoon, in a

manner, as they are born; or to others, who live longer, but not to an Age, wherein they have the proper uſe and exerciſe of Reaſon; and who therefore, tho' endowed with rational Souls, ſcarce appear to live for any End or Purpoſe, except what relates only to the animal Life, and even to that in a very imperfect State of it? What ſhall we ſay to whole Nations, in ſome parts of the heathen World, who are involved in the moſt groſs Ignorance, and given up to the moſt abominable Corruptions; and that through an accidental Unhappineſs, and almoſt invincible Force of Education? What ſhall we ſay, in concluſion to the generality of Mankind, even in more civilized and polite Nations, if God has provided no means of greater Perfection, no *better Things, for them?* Indeed the wiſeſt of Men in this World, appear in reſpect of Truth, to be only creeping out of Darkneſs, and the beſt of Men in reſpect of Morals to diſcover, that how imperfect ſoever their Knowledge in general may be, they are yet much more deficient in reducing what they know, to practice.

To give you then my Thoughts, Sir, freely on this Occaſion, I could almoſt as ſoon perſuade my ſelf, extravagant and irrational as ſuch a Suppoſition is, that Mankind were made by Chance, and without any Deſign; as that a wiſe God deſigned no other Ends in making them, but what we are able to diſcover

ver under the preſent Circumſtances, and within the preſent Compaſs of human Life. To return from theſe occaſional Reflexions,

3. When we attribute *vital* Powers to the Body, if we directly intend any Senſation or inward Conſciouſneſs of Life in the Body, we ſpeak improperly, and according to vulgar Opinion. No injury can be done to the Body by deſtroying the vital Frame of it, ſince, ſtrictly ſpeaking, it is conſidered only as Body, or a ſyſtem of Matter without *perception* of Life. Neither is any Breach made in the Order or Uſe of material created Beings, by a diſſolution of its Parts, which in a continued Succeſſion may ſerve to other Ends of the inanimate, the vegetative, or animal Creation. Thoſe Senſations, which are now attributed to the Body, may be continued to the Soul in a ſeparate State. As the Body is only an occaſion of them, God may, if he thinks fit, imprint the Ideas, ariſing by means of it, upon the Mind, without the Body.

A natural Reaſon then may be aſſigned, why the preſent Frame of the Body ſhould be deſtroyed, and why the Deſtruction of it may conſiſt with the wiſe Ends, and Reaſons of Providence. But ſince no Reaſon can be aſſigned why the Powers of the Soul ſhould be deſtroyed, but we are able to aſſign many Reaſons from the Wiſdom of God, why they ſhould not be deſtroyed; we cannot argue,

from what happens, in the natural courſe and order of Things, to the Body; to what will happen, againſt the natural courſe and order of Things, to the Soul.

SECT. XVIII.

Probable Reaſons for the Union of the Soul and Body.

IF you ask, to what End then ſerveth the Body? Or why was it united to the Soul, if the Soul could have had all its Ideas and Senſations without it? It may be ſaid, there are Reaſons, notwithſtanding, from a conſideration of the divine Wiſdom, why this Union was made, ſome of which we may be capable of aſſigning.

1. It is an evident and continual Demonſtration of the Power of God, that Subſtances ſo very different, as thoſe of the Soul and Body, ſhould act reciprocally upon one another, when there is no common Tie, nor can be any Contact, or any Law of Communication between them, but what depends on the divine Will.

2. As the Power, ſo the Wiſdom of God is continually diſcover'd by the admirable Conſtruction of the material World; by the Simpli-

Simplicity of thoſe Laws, in Virtue of which the whole Syſtem is preſerv'd and govern'd, and the ſeveral Parts of it act according to the moſt exquiſite Order, in ſubſerviency to one another, as the different Poſts and Offices, to which they are appointed, do require.

3. As God might deſign for theſe and other Reaſons, the Union of Soul and Body, he might farther Will, that the Senſes ſhould be the Occaſional Cauſe to the Soul of its preſent Senſations, and, for the moſt part, of its Ideas, the better to maintain the Commerce of the Soul with the ſenſible World. Could we but have the leaſt clear proſpect into the intelligible World, and be able diſtinctly to perceive how we came by our Ideas, or by what Canals they are deriv'd to us, we ſhould be ſo charmed with the Beauty and Pleaſure of ſuch a Proſpect, that we ſhould, from that moment, deſpiſe the Body, and every thing, that had any relation to it. Metaphyſicks, for which ſo few Perſons have now any taſte, would then be the only Subject to all Mankind, of their Speculations: The Mechanical Arts would be wholly neglected, and the great Buſineſs of Life, which now conſiſts in eating and drinking, and other animal Gratifications, and wherewith the Soul is ſo much taken up and affected, would not have the leaſt Power of moving it.

And

And therefore to preſerve the better Correſpondence between the Soul and the Body, and that the Soul may not treat a Conſort ſo unequal and inferior to it, with Contempt and Diſdain. God has wiſely ordain'd, that the Body ſhould be the occaſional Cauſe, at leaſt, of certain Ideas, and pleaſing Senſations to the Soul: In return to which, the Soul takes care to preſerve the Body, and to provide, ſo well as it can, for the Eaſe, the Convenience and Support of it: And indeed, were it not for this exchange of good Offices between the Soul and Body, or could the Soul come at the pure Fountain of Truth, by a clear and direct View, it would immediately deſire to be freed from the Body, as from a Priſon, and the great Obſtacle to its Liberty and Enjoyments.

It has been thought, that the Action of ſenſible Objects in this Life, upon the Soul, does, in ſome Caſes, give too ſtrong and violent a Concuſſion to it: But this may be be conſider'd as a wiſe Deſign of God, to maintain a Commerce agreeable to his own appointment; were the Impreſſions of Senſe, in any degree, or in general, leſs ſtrong, it may be queſtion'd, whether conſidering the natural thirſt of Men after Knowledge, there might be a ſufficient Number of them to attend the ordinary Affairs, or even the neceſſary Functions of Human Life, in its preſent State.

SECT.

SECT. XIX.

An Objection answer'd from Thought and Senſation, or the Appearances of them, in Animals.

IF, notwithſtanding the ſeveral Reaſons which have been mention'd, againſt the Annihilation of Human Souls, you ſhould now, Sir, oppoſe that popular Queſtion, What then will become of ſo vaſt a Number of Animals, wherein we diſcover ſuch obvious Inſtances of Thought and Senſation? we have ſtill nothing to fear on our Side of the Argument.

Whether Animals really think, whether in certain Movements they do not diſcover a Power of Election, or if thoſe Senſations of Pleaſure and Pain, which we attribute to them, are any thing more than Appearances, or certain external Significations of Pleaſure and Pain, which, conſidering the Work of an infinitely Wiſe Creator, may be accounted for upon thoſe Mechanical Laws of Motion which he has eſtabliſh'd, or by the direction of ſome foreign intelligent Being or Beings; theſe are Problems, which have been diſputed on each Side, by the fineſt Philoſophical Wits.

But

But we have no occaſion to enter into a formal diſquiſition upon theſe Heads; whatever Determination we make concerning them, no Argument can be drawn from it, to ſhew that an Alwiſe God will deſtroy any *intelligent* Being that he has made. If Animals are really actuated by particular intelligent Souls, but more limited in their Powers and Operations, than thoſe of Men, yet it will be impoſſible to prove, that their Souls may not for ever ſubſiſt in a ſucceſſive change of proper material Vehicles, or *without* them: So that if all the Matter in the World ſhould be ſometime annihilated, when the proper Ends, for which it was created, are attained (and the Reaſons againſt the Annihilation of it, are of leſs Force, as it is a Subſtance perfectly inſenſate) the reaſon why immaterial intelligent Beings, endow'd with Senſation, ſhould for ever continue, may nevertheleſs ſtill ſubſiſt. We are not however, in any Caſe, to argue from uncertain Conjectures, or unknown Effects, from Effects impoſſible to be known, againſt the Nature, Reaſon, and Evidence of Things.

SECT.

SECT. XX.

That the Soul, ſuppoſing the ordinary Concourſe of Providence continued to it, is capable of ſubſiſting and exerciſing the Powers proper to it, in a future State.

THE Concluſion, which would now follow from what has been here ſaid, is, that if the Soul ſhould really ceaſe to exiſt or operate in a future State, it muſt be,

2. *In the ſecond place*, Becauſe ſomething more is required to ſuſtain it in Being, or to preſerve the Powers of it, beſides the general Concourſe of Providence to this End.

But it is an unanſwerable Argument againſt the Suppoſition of any ſuch thing, that as we have no Idea of it, nor can poſſibly conceive what it ſhould be, neither is there any manner of occaſion for it.

The only poſſible Pretence, upon which any Occaſion of it can be ſuppoſed, is, that the Ideas of the Soul are here received by means of ſenſible Objects. When the Soul has therefore no farther Communication with the Body, or the Organs of Senſe, it ſeems reaſonable to conclude, that the cauſe of its

Ideas ceaſing, it can no longer have any Ideas; and conſequently can no longer think, for the removal of the Cauſe muſt neceſſarily infer that of the Effect.

This Pretence has been already obviated in part; but becauſe Unbelievers place their main Strength in it, I ſhall here give it a more particular Examination.

1. Then I argue, that admitting we do now, for Reaſons reſpecting the preſent State, receive all our Ideas by occaſion of the Senſes, or in Virtue of that Law by which God has appointed, that ſuch Impreſſions upon the Body ſhall be followed with ſuch Notices in the Mind, yet the true Cauſe of our Ideas muſt ſtill be independent of the Body, and may therefore act upon the Soul, whether the occaſional Cauſe be removed, or not.

So that the Queſtion is, whether the true Cauſe, whatever it *may* do, yet really *will* act without the Body, or occaſional Cauſe, in a ſeparate State. And to prove that it *will*, all thoſe Arguments whereby I have evinced, that God will not deſtroy the Powers of the Soul in a ſeparate State, do, by neceſſary Conſequence, equally demonſtrate. For to preſerve the Faculties of the Soul to no End, or Uſe, the Faculties for inſtance of Thinking and Willing, without any Object to be thought upon or choſen, is as inconſiſtent with all our Ideas of the divine Wiſdom,

Wiſdom, as the total Deſtruction of our Faculties could be ſuppoſed.

If the Senſes are the efficient Cauſe of our Ideas, they can only be conceiv'd to be ſo, by means of their tranſmitting certain material Images of outwards Objects to the Mind. That there can be no ſuch material Images of Things in the Mind which are the Cauſe of its Perception, I have occaſionally obſerved before, but ſhall now as I propoſed, endeavour more fully to prove this Aſſertion.

SECT. XXI.

That there is no Connexion between a material Image of any Object in the Mind, and the Perception of ſuch Image, by the Mind.

IF material Images of Things are convey'd to the Mind by the Senſes, and there repoſited for the Soul to employ, as there is Occaſion, the Reaſon of it muſt be this, that the Preſſure made by any external Object upon a proper Organ of Senſe, muſt produce a Re-action of that Organ, by which a Phantome, or Image of it is form'd. This is Mr. *Hobbs*'s way, and it ſeems the only tolera-

ble way of accounting, how the notice of external Objects is communicated to the Mind. But this true Scheme, after all, does not, in the leaſt, tend to forward our Conceptions, how ſuch a Phantome can become intelligible, or what manner of Connection it can yet have with Thought. It may, with equal appearance of Reaſon be inferred, becauſe a Glaſs reflects a Man's Face, it has therefore an inward Perception of that Face. Without ſhewing, what dependence there is between Thought and external Impreſſions, which it is impoſſible for you to ſhew, the moſt exquiſite mechanical Structure will never be able to produce one intelligible Image; the Image, concerning the origin of which, we now enquire.

When we are told that Bodies act reciprocally upon one another, we eaſily apprehend what is ſaid; or if we ſee the Impreſſion of a Man's Foot upon the Sand, we find no difficulty in conceiving how it was made. But ſhould we be told, that the Sand, where we obſerve a Man's Footſtep, really thinks, and has a perfect Idea of the Figure impreſſed on it, we ſhould laugh at ſo ſtrange and chimerical an Aſſertion. After all the Eſſays of Imagination, which you can make, I am confident, Sir, you will find it equally impoſſible to apprehend from any Impreſſion made upon the Senſes by an external Object, how

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the Mind by Virtue of ſuch Impreſſion can perceive that Object.

If the immediate Object of the Mind be ſomething material, the Mind could have no Idea or Image, but only of material Subſtance. As to Modes and Accidents which do not really exiſt in the Bodies to which they are apply'd, and are mere abſtracted Notions, or external Denominations form'd by the Soul, there could be no Perception of them in the Mind, becauſe no Image to repreſent them, except you could ſuppoſe an Image, a material Image, of what neither is Matter, nor really exiſts,

Bodies, for inſtance, appear to be of ſuch a particular Colour; Colour being no Subſtance, no material Particles can fly off from it to tinge the Light, whereby it is convey'd to the Eye. The Light indeed has a Power of ſtriking the Eye, but the Colour convey'd by means of it, cannot import what it has not; ſo that however the Organs of Viſion may be moved or penetrated by the Rays of Light, there can be no poſſible conveyance of Colour with it, from any mechanical Laws of Action or Reflexion, of Impulſe or Vibration; for theſe being only the affections of Matter, cannot proceed from what is not Matter. The different Magnitude, Force, or Figure of the Rays of Light, may indeed contribute to make the Rays of it more quick or ſlow, more ſtrong or affecting: But there

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is ſtill no Connection between theſe Effects and Colour, nor poſſibly can be on ſuppoſition that the immediate Object of our Ideas is ſomething material, becauſe nothing but Matter can communicate material Particles.

This one Argument plainly proves, that the immediate Object of Thought is ſomething incorporeal, foreign to all mechanical Laws of Motion, or impreſſed Signatures of outward Objects in the Mind; and that even ſimple Apprehenſion cannot be accounted for by any ſuch Signatures, much leſs univerſal Ideas; but, leaſt of all, ſhall we be able to deduce from them univerſal Propoſitions, or diſcover by what mechanical Laws of Matter, a long train of Arguments, when we purſue it, is form'd and connected, or what the different Contexture of thoſe Particles may be, which aſſent or affirm, from thoſe which doubt, which withold their aſſent, or deny.

Neither is it poſſible to account from any material Signatures, for the Senſations of Pain or Pleaſure. There is no difficulty in conceiving, how an Inciſion made in any part of a human Body may cauſe a Diſorder in the adjoining Veſſels, or in thoſe at a greater diſtance, with which it has any ſpecial Communication, till this Diſorder at laſt, by the Motion of the Spirits, ſhall re-act to the Brain, or the common Senſory, by which means the whole animal Oeconomy will be

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in one degree or other affected. But how this ſhould cauſe any Sentiment of Pain is ſtill as unaccountable, as if we knew no more concerning the Conſtruction of a human Body, than we do through what chanel the animal Spirits are convey'd to the Mind, what they are, or whether after all they really ſubſiſt, or only in Imagination.

Neither were we able to conceive the Progreſs of all the Diſorders, and particularly of the animal Spirits in the corporeal Syſtem, could the Senſation of Pain be any material Image. Becauſe all Matter conſiſts of Parts, and may be reſolved, mentally at leaſt, into them. But we are not capable of diſtinguiſhing any Part in Pain, it is a ſimple and uniform Senſation, tho' in reſpect to its continuance, it is divſible into Parts of Time. And we may make a like Obſervation concerning the former inſtance of Colour, which as diſtinguiſhed from coloured Body, has no Parts, nor can be conceived to have any by the Mind.

Laſtly, If the Ideas on our Mind are nothing but certain material-Images, it is impoſſible that we ſhould ſo much as form a Notion concerning any thing Immaterial, or raiſe the leaſt Doubt, whether there can poſſibly be any other Subſtance than Matter in the World. So that to a Materialiſt, the very Queſtion, Whether any thing Immaterial can think, cannot have ſo much as an imaginary

ginary Foundation; and therefore he neither knows, upon this Queſtion, what he denies, nor whereof he affirms. However the Mind, ſuppoſing the Soul immaterial, may abſtract from Matter and Motion, yet if there be nothing but Matter and Motion in it, if all its Ideas are formed by material Images, unleſs you will ſuppoſe an effect without a Cauſe, it is impoſſible it ſhould have any Image, adequate or inadequate, of what is not, or be capable ſo much as of diſputing, *whether* it is not.

SECT. XXII.

The Inference from the foregoing Argument.

AND now I hope, Sir, it ſufficiently appears, that there is no natural, or neceſſary, or rather, indeed, no poſſible Connection, between a material Object without the Mind, and a material intelligible Image in it. Neither is the Force of my Argument in the leaſt diminiſhed, whether the Ideas, by what the Soul perceives, are *ſubjectively* in it, or in the ſupreme original Fountain of Truth; wherein, as in a Mirrour, the Soul beholds and contemplates them; and wherein, Mat-

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ter, on Acconnt of all its Incapacities before mentioned, cannot behold or contemplate them. And therefore I have argued, that the Soul is immaterial, from the immateriality of our Ideas ſimply conſidered, without entring into that nice Queſtion, whether we ſee all our Ideas in God, or, by virtue of our natural Faculties, in the Reflexion of our own Minds.

SECT. XXIII.

A more general Inference.

THE Concluſion, Sir, which I am now to draw from what has been ſaid in general, is, that if the Soul be here, in reſpect to the rational Faculties and Powers of it, independent of the Body; if it do not receive its Ideas from the Body, as from a material or efficient Cauſe, but only as an occaſional Cauſe; then the Soul neither depends as to the Exiſtence, or the immediate Operations of it upon the Body, and conſequently it may, and for the ſeveral Reaſons before-mentioned, will exiſt and operate in a future State, when ſeparated from the Body; ſuppoſing, what I have proved, that the ge-

neral Concourſe of Providence, ſhall then be continued to it.

SECT. XXIV.

Arguments for the Immortality of the Soul, from a Conſideration of the divine Goodneſs.

I HAVE hitherto, Sir, principally formed my Arguments in proof of the Soul's Immortality, from a Conſideration of the divine Wiſdom. There are alſo very ſtrong Reaſons, from that of the divine Goodneſs, upon which the Truth of this great Article may be diſtinctly eſtabliſhed: But, having enlarged ſo much in confirmation of the former Head, I ſhall endeavour to reduce them into as narrow a Compaſs, as poſſible.

All the external Effects of divine Goodneſs, we grant, were in the Origin of them arbitrary, and flowed from the free Determination of the divine Will. So that antecedently to the Decree of creating human Souls, God without the leaſt diminution of his Goodneſs, might not have proceeded to create them; yet when he had once created them, his Goodneſs, according to all our Ideas of Goodneſs, required that he ſhould make ſome ſuitable

ſuitable Proviſion for the natural Capacities and Deſires, with which he was pleaſed to create them. It would be impious to ſuppoſe, that a good God ſhould implant thoſe natural Capacities and Deſires in his Creatures, which there is nothing in Nature to anſwer or ſatisfy. A vain and fruitleſs Deſire is rather injurious than beneficial to thoſe who are poſſeſſed with it, as ſerving only to betray them into falſe deluſory Hopes, and obliging them to purſue Meaſures, which after all their Trouble, or expence of Time, muſt neceſſarily terminate in their Diſappointment.

In civil Life, tho' we are originally at liberty, whether we will do Service to thoſe, who have no particular Pretenſions to expect it, yet when once we have given them expectations to that End, what might at firſt be the effect of pure Benevolence, or only flow from a generous Motive of Humanity, becomes afterwards, in many Caſes, Matter of ſtrict and indiſpenſable Juſtice; yet where ſtrict Juſtice may not poſſibly oblige Men to anſwer the Expectations they have given, it is ſtill, by no means reconcileable with the Character of a good Man, that when he has laid the Foundation of a good and beneficent Work, he ſhould not proceed to ſuperſtruct upon it; but leave it crude and unfiniſhed, or without bringing it, in any competent Degree, to perfection.

It is ſtill leſs reconcileable with the Character of Goodneſs, to withdraw any Powers or Faculties, which have been in Fact already conferred; and yet on ſuppoſition that a good God will not withdraw his ordinary Concourſe from the Soul of Man, it muſt be immortal, in virtue of its very Conſtitution, and by a natural effect of his own Appointment.

If the goodneſs of God incline him to *poſitive*, and particular Acts of Favour or Beneficence, we may piouſly conclude, he will never deny his general Concourſe to the Souls of Men, without which, they might be no longer capable of ſubſiſting. A juſt Man will think himſelf obliged to render to the Expectations of thoſe, whom he has kept in any Dependence, at leaſt in *full Meaſure*: But a *righteous*, a good Man, will rather exceed in his Retributions, and give Meaſure *preſſed down*, and *running over*.

SECT. XXV.

An Argument in particular from the Conſideration of the divine Love.

SO far as Love may admit of a diſtinct Conſideration from Goodneſs, we may argue from the Love of God to human Souls, as

as his Creatures, that he will never deſtroy them, or withdraw thoſe common Aſſiſtances, which are neceſſary to their Preſervation. When I cite the following pious Addreſs to God, from the Author of the Book of *Wiſdom*, I do not propoſe it as being founded, in any extraordinary or divine Authority, but only in the natural Reaſon of the Thing. *Thou loveſt all Things that are, and abhorreſt nothing which thou haſt made; for neither wouldſt thou have made any thing, if thou hadſt hated it.*

But now it is contrary to the very Nature, and to all the Motions of Love, that it ſhould deſtroy it's proper Object; for that would be to deſtroy it ſelf, and the Foundation of its own Happineſs. Nothing is more ungrateful to Love, than to do any thing that is diſpleaſing, eſpecially that is really injurious or prejudicial to what we love; but to reduce the Object of our Love to nothing, to baniſh it out of the World, for ever to deprive our ſelves of all commerce with it, would certainly be an Act, could we ſuppoſe it practicable or conſiſtent, not of Love, but of the greateſt abhorrence.

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SECT. XXVI.

An Objection anſwer'd, relating to the Miſery, or the Puniſhment of Sinners.

THE main Difficulty againſt what has been been ſaid, in relation to the Goodneſs of God, ſeems to lye here, that if any Argument can be drawn from this Attribute, why God ſhould not deſtroy Human Souls, it may be thought to conclude, with equal Force, why he ſhould not render them miſerable.

To this it is anſwer'd, that the Miſery of Sinners, is a natural, and, according to the eſtabliſh'd Order of Things, a neceſſary Effect of Sin; and God is not oblig'd to interpoſe by an extraordinary miraculous Power to prevent, what naturally happens.

When God does interpoſe to inflict any poſitive Puniſhment upon Sinners, it is becauſe Reaſons of Order, Government, or Juſtice, require ſuch Puniſhment ſhould be inflicted, and where Goodneſs therefore cannot interpoſe; for that is only exerciſed in relation to ſuch things, which leave us perfectly at liberty, and free from other moral Conſiderations.

Should Reaſons either of Wiſdom or Juſtice require, that Human Souls ſhould be annihilated,

nihilated, we grant it might very well conſiſt with the Goodneſs of God, that they ſhould be annihilated; but we are not to argue from the Goodneſs of God, againſt Reaſons of Wiſdom or Juſtice, but only where they do not ſuperſede the Inclinations of it.

Tho' the Goodneſs of God, abſtractedly conſider'd, might then diſpoſe him to prevent the Miſery of Sinners, by their Annihilation, becauſe it is better for them not to be, than to be miſerable: Yet, as a Wiſe and Juſt Governour of the World, God is oblig'd to proceed in relation to his Creatures, according to the Rules of Wiſdom and Juſtice, and not of *abſolute* Goodneſs.

I only infer the Immortality of Humane Souls, from their natural Capacities for Immortality, and thoſe natural Deſires, wherewith they are continually carry'd towards it; If they have done any thing to forfeit that Happineſs, for which they were naturally form'd, their Miſery and Deſtruction is of themſelves: God is not oblig'd, by any poſitive Act of His Will, to deſtroy their Natural Powers, of which they might have made a better uſe, and wherein they would have found that Happineſs, for which the Author of Nature originally qualify'd and deſign'd them.

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SECT. XXVII.

An Anſwer to what is charged, in the Free-Thinker's Letter, upon the Clergy, more particularly reſpecting their Character as Preachers.

SIR, the only part of your Letter, which now remains to be conſider'd, is concerning your Reflexions, how decent, I ſhall not ſay, upon the Clergy, and upon the Uſe, which they make of the Doctrines I have been conſidering, towards enforcing their Harangues, as you reſpectfully term them, from the Pulpit.

If it be the proper Buſineſs of Eccleſiaſticks to aſſert theſe Doctrines, they ought not to ſuffer Reproach for attending that Buſineſs, either becauſe they were oblig'd to ſubſcribe to them, or becauſe they are, in the nature of them, expedient to render their Inſtructions more effectual; except you could be able to prove, what, by this time, I hope, you are ſatisfy'd is incapable of Proof, that thoſe Doctrines have no good or real Foundation: There can otherwiſe be no ſcope for your inſulting the Clergy, either on account of their Office, as Preachers, or from their manner of executing it.

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God Almighty has not given all Talents to all Men: If ſome of the Clergy, among ſo numerous a Body, be more defective in their Character of Preachers, they may yet have proper Qualifications for diſcharging other important Parts of the Paſtoral Office, and whereof there is frequently, at leaſt, as great an occaſion, as for the common Method of Preaching.

But Preachers, ſuppoſing a Future State, and the Immortality of the Soul, cannot inſiſt too much, or too often, upon theſe weighty Subjects; we can never be inſtant *out of Seaſon*, or be too zealouſly affected in a Matter, upon which an endleſs State of Happineſs or Miſery depends.

The Belief, indeed, of theſe two Articles alone, if it were ſtrong, lively, and operative, would render us much leſs capable of being mov'd with any Conſiderations foreign to it; whatever *Arts of Perſuaſion* Preachers might employ, or tho' they *could ſpeak with the Tongue of Men and Angels.*

However, it may be obſerv'd, that People have, in general, at preſent, and eſpecially thoſe in the Communion of our excellent Church, the Benefit of a learned and able Miniſtry; and that the World has ſeldom, if ever, had more excellent Preachers, or a greater Number of them: When indeed, there is ſo ſlender a Proviſion made for many of the Clergy, where a diſtribution of the Ec-

cleſiaſtical Revenues is, ſometimes, ſo very unequal: Where Paſtors cannot conſtantly attend their Studies, on account of continual Diſtractions, or the neceſſary Affairs of Life; it cannot be expected that all the Clergy ſhould be equally qualify'd, and in every reſpect, for the Work of the Miniſtry.

It is not impoſſible to aſſign other Reaſons for the different Capacities of the Clergy, particularly conſider'd as Preachers. If after all, there can be any juſt Cauſe of Complaint upon this Head: But the Reaſons already mention'd, in reference to it, are ſufficient to ſhew how weak and unjuſt a Charge you have here exhibited againſt them.

If what I have ſaid, in theſe Letters, may be of uſe towards the diſcovery of Truth, or the removal of your Prejudices, I ſhall have my End in Writing them, and think my Endeavours, to that End, abundantly rewarded.

I am,

SIR,

FINIS.

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